

# The Consultation of Experts in the Special Committees of the Parliament of Finland

Differences between National and European Matters

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Discipline of Political Science

Master's Thesis

May 2015



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos – Institution – Department Department of Political and Economic Studies	
Tekijä □ – Författare – Author Timo Niilo Aulanko			
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title The Consultation of Experts in the Special Committees of the Parliament of Finland. Differences between National and European Matters			
Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject Discipline of Political Science, Study line of Politics			
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Master's Thesis		Aika – Datum – Month and year May 2015	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages 76
Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract			
<p>This thesis studies the use of expert consultations by the Finance, Administration, Agriculture and Forestry, and Commerce Committees of the Parliament of Finland during the year 2013, and examines the differences between national and EU-related matters. Expert consultations are an important method for committee members to gain information on the actions of the executive and on the matters they are handling. Although the Grand Committee is the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament, the relevance of the special committees in the handling of EU-matters has increased in recent years. Much of the research on parliamentary scrutiny of European issues has focused on the Grand Committee, with the special committees receiving little attention.</p> <p>The consultation performed by the committees have been analysed through a theoretical framework derived from the principal-agent theory. The special committees are viewed as principals of the executive, and of their counterpart ministries, whom power has been delegated to by the Parliament. The study examines expert consultations by focusing on the frequencies of experts consulted, the backgrounds of the experts and the use of consultations as a method of oversight. The data used in the analysis of this thesis was gathered from all of the reports and statements adopted by the committees during the year 2013. All the experts consulted were coded and categorised according to the institutions they represented. The matters handled by the committees were categorised to matters with an EU-connection and matters without an EU-connection based on their content. U- and E-communications formed separate categories. The data was analysed through statistical methods.</p> <p>The analysis of the data shows that the committees consult fewer experts during the handling of U- and E-communications, with the difference being greatest in the Administration Committee. There are otherwise no significant differences in the amount of experts consulted. During the handling of U- and E-communications the committees also rely more on the hearing of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter than during the handling of other matters. Representatives of third parties form a majority of all of the experts consulted by the committees during the handling of all matters, indicating that the committees utilise the knowledge of the third parties when monitoring the actions of the executive. Of the four committees, the consultations of the Finance Committee differ the most between EU-connected matters and other matters.</p> <p>The results of this thesis show that there are certain differences in the consultation of experts performed by the committees, but that the largest differences can be found between the consultations during the handling of U- and E-communications and consultations during the handling of other matters. The results indicate that, regarding expert consultations, the committee members do not differentiate between national legislation that is intended to implement EU directives from legislation that is of national origin without an EU-connection. The lower use of consultation during the handling of U- and E-communications do not indicate that the committees concentrate their efforts in gaining information at the early stages of the legislative process at the EU-level</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords committees expert consultations EU-matters principal agent delegation oversight			



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Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Valtiotieteellinen tiedekunta		Laitos – Institution – Department Politiikan ja talouden tutkimuksen laitos	
Tekijä □ – Författare – Author Timo Niilo Aulanko			
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title The Consultation of Experts in the Special Committees of the Parliament of Finland. Differences between National and European Matters			
Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject Yleinen valtio-oppi, politiikan tutkimuksen linja			
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Pro Gradu -tutkielma		Aika – Datum – Month and year Toukokuu 2015	
		Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages 76	
Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract			
<p>Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee valtiovarainvaliokunnan, hallintovaliokunnan, maa- ja metsätalousvaliokunnan ja talousvaliokunnan asiantuntijakuulemisia vuodelta 2013. Tarkoituksena on vertailla eroavaisuuksia kansallisten asioiden ja EU:iin liittyvien asioiden välillä. Asiantuntijakuulemiset ovat merkittävässä asemassa valiokuntien hankkiessa tietoa toimeenpanovallasta ja käsiteltävästä asiasta. Vaikka suuri valiokunta toimii keskeisenä valiokuntana EU:iin liittyvien asioiden hoidossa, on erikoisvaliokuntien merkitys EU-asioiden käsittelyssä kasvanut. Eduskunnan EU-asioiden käsittelyyn liittyvä tutkimus on kuitenkin keskittynyt suuren valiokunnan tarkastelemiseen.</p> <p>Tutkielmassa valiokuntien asiantuntijakuulemiset on analysoitu päämies-agentti –teorian mukaisen teoreettisen viitekehyksen mukaisesti. Valiokuntia tarkastellaan toimeenpanovallan, ja vastinministeriöidensä valvojina, joille eduskunta on delegoinut valtaansa. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan asiantuntijakuulemisia keskittymällä kuulemisten määrään, asiantuntijoiden taustatahoon ja kuulemisten käyttöön valvonnan toimintatapana. Aineisto on kerätty valiokuntien vuonna 2013 antamista mietinnöistä ja lausunnoista. Kaikki valiokuntien kuulemat asiantuntijat on koodattu ja luokiteltu heidän edustamiensa taustatahojen perusteella. Käsiteltävät asiat on luokiteltu EU:iin liittyviin ja EU:iin liittymättömiin asioihin sisällön perusteella. U- ja E-kirjelmät muodostavat oman kategoriansa. Aineisto analysoitiin tilastollisia menetelmiä käyttämällä.</p> <p>Tutkielman analyysi osoittaa valiokuntien kuulevan vähemmän asiantuntijoita U- ja E-kirjelmien käsittelyssä kuin muiden asioiden käsittelyssä. Ero oli merkittävin hallintovaliokunnassa. Muita merkittäviä eroja kuulemisten määrässä ei havaittu. Valiokunnat myös kuulevat suhteellisesti enemmän asian valmistelleen ministeriön edustajia käsitellessään U- ja E-kirjelmiä. Kolmansien osapuolien edustajat muodostivat enemmistön asiantuntijoista kaikkien asioiden kuulemisissa, joka viittaa valiokuntien käyttävän heidän kauttaan saamaansa informaatiota hyväkseen toimeenpanovallan valvonnassa. Tutkimuksen kohteena olleista neljästä valiokunnasta valtiovarainvaliokunnan asiantuntijakuulemiset poikkesivat eniten muista valiokunnista. Erot asiantuntijoiden taustatahoissa EU:iin liittyvien asioiden ja muiden asioiden välillä olivat myös suurimpia valtiovarainvaliokunnassa.</p> <p>Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että asiantuntijakuulemisissa on tiettyjä eroavaisuuksia EU-asioiden ja muiden asioiden välillä, mutta että suurimmat erot löytyvät U- ja E-kirjelmien ja muiden asioiden asiantuntijakuulemisten väliltä. Tulokset osoittavat, että asiantuntijakuulemisten osalta valiokuntien jäsenet eivät erottele tai käsittele erilaisesti puhtaasti kansallista lainsäädäntöä sellaisesta lainsäädännöstä, jolla kansallisesti toimeenpannaan EU-direktiivejä. Vähäisempi asiantuntijoiden kuuleminen ei tue ajatusta valiokuntien aktiivisesta tiedonkeruusta EU-tason päätöksenteon alkuvaiheissa.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords valiokunnat asiantuntijakuuleminen EU-asiat päämies agentti delegaatio valvonta			

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## **1. Introduction**

Special committees form a central part of the Parliament of Finland and the handling of matters in the committee system is vital to the legislative process of the Parliament. Committees allow Members of Parliament (MP) to specialise, to debate and discuss without publicity and gain new information through expert consultations. In the Finnish political system committees are vital to the workings of the Parliament, or Eduskunta, as legislative proposals and other matters are considered in the plenary on the basis of reports adopted by the committees. Committees have been categorised as the places "where the actual work [of the Parliament] is done" (Vainio 2007).

Special committees have started to play an ever bigger role in the processing European Union (EU) issues, necessitated partly by the increase of the workload of the European Affairs Committees (EAC), but also motivated by the need to utilise the policy expertise of the MPs (Raunio 2009, 319). Research on the EU has focused on national parliaments as well in the last decades, but much of the previous research has concentrated on the European Affairs Committees, the Grand Committee in the Finnish Parliament, with the special committees of the parliaments receiving less attention.

In this thesis I will specifically study special committees that have been active in the parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs in the Parliament. Special committees are important actors in the handling of European matters in the Finnish Parliament, and researching them provides us with invaluable information on the handling of European affairs in the Parliament that would be impossible to gain through research focused purely on EACs. A more extensive standpoint of research helps us develop a better understanding of the handling of EU issues in the Parliament as a whole.

I will analyse the committees and the ways they conduct expert consultations through a theoretical framework of the principal-agent theory. In the thesis I will study the committees as they function as principals to the agent, the executive, which has been delegated powers by the Parliament. The principal-agent theory has proved its use in the research of parliamentary committees in many studies throughout decades, but it has not yet been thoroughly used in the study of the handling of European matters in the Parliament of Finland.

The objective of this thesis is to study the use of expert consultations, especially regarding possible differences between national and European issues. I will also focus on the different methods of oversight parliamentary committees have been shown to use when combating problems related to delegation.

Expert consultations in the committees form an integral part of the work of the committees: committee handling begins with committee hearings and they are significant for the MPs as a means to gain information. Although the hearing of experts in the committees of the Eduskunta have been researched previously, there is very little research done on the consultation of experts related to the handling of EU matters. Previous studies have focused on a general view of expert consultations (Helander & Pekonen 2007), on a specific committee (Wiberg 2003) or more on some specific backgrounds of experts consulted, such as gender (Holli & Saari 2009) and specific types of organisations (Saari 2012).

There are indications in previous research of a possible difference of expert consultations between matters with an EU connection and matters without such a connection. In this thesis I will develop on these indications by providing a first systematic research on expert consultations of the special committees of the Parliament of Finland regarding the differences between national and European matters.

The study will concentrate on four committees of the Parliament of Finland: the Finance Committee; the Administration Committee; the Agriculture and Forestry Committee; and the Commerce Committee. These four committees handled the most EU-related dossiers of the committees of the Parliament of Finland during the years 1995 and 2011<sup>1</sup>. The prevalence of European issues in the committees will have likely lead to a forming of practices regarding expert consultations on EU-matters, which can be analysed in this study. These committees are also more likely to have more hearings on both domestic and European matters than other committees in the parliament.

The four committees differ from each other in terms of the policy fields they are responsible for, as the Finance and Administration Committees are primarily

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<sup>1</sup> The statistics provided by the Parliament of Finland only list U and E-communications as EU matters. Of these communications, the Finance Committee handled the most (449 communications), followed by the Commerce Committee (375), the Administration Committee (330) and Agriculture and Forestry Committee (301).

responsible for legislation affecting public law while the Commerce and the Agriculture and Forestry Committees handle mainly legislation on private law. The different policy fields of the committees provides for a more extensive view.

In the study I will seek to answer the following questions:

*1) is there a difference in the number of experts called on by the committees during the handling of non-EU related issues and the experts called on by the committees during the handling of EU-related issues?;*

*2) is there a difference between the backgrounds or the institutions represented by the experts consulted in the committees during the handling of non-EU-related issues and EU-related issues?;*

*3) is there a difference in the method of oversight between EU-related issues and issues that are not related to the EU as depicted by the backgrounds or the institutions represented by the experts consulted by the committees?*

The research questions will be further expanded on in chapter 5, where I will clarify their links to the theoretical framework of the study as well as previous research on the parliamentary committees of Eduskunta.

The structure of this thesis begins with an introduction to the previous research on the committees of the Finnish Parliament in chapter 2, focusing especially on the four committees, which are the research subjects of this thesis. I will present an overview of the tasks of the committees and describe the use of expert consultations and the handling of European affairs in the committees.

Chapter 3 provides a description of the theoretical framework used in the thesis. I will first describe the principal-agent theory, followed by an introduction to the risks of delegation and the mechanisms used to alleviate those risks. Chapter 3 ends with me locating the committees in the theoretical framework. I will also discuss the different methods of oversight committees use and the incentives for scrutiny MPs have.

In chapter 4 I will further examine the research settings, and the research questions in light of the theory and previous research on committee found in chapters 2 and 3. I will continue by presenting the data and methods used in the study.

The analysis of the data follows in chapter 5, which is divided into three sub-chapters according to the research questions, with each sub-chapter focusing on one research question. Conclusions and reflection of the findings are summarised in chapter 6.



## 2. Parliamentary Committees in Research

Permanent committees are very important to the functioning of most parliaments - the Finnish Parliament included. The main functions of parliamentary committees include the preparation of legislative proposals and the control of the executive. (Damgaard 1995, 309-311.)

As committees of national parliaments are such crucial actors in many parliamentary democracies, it is unsurprising that they have received much attention in political science. The committees of the Eduskunta have also received attention from scholars, both in the fields of political science and law. In this chapter I will describe the functions of the committees, their use of expert consultations during committee handling and the handling of European affairs in Eduskunta through an introduction of previous research.

### 2.1 The Committees of the Eduskunta

The tasks of the committees of Eduskunta are to prepare Government bills, legislative proposals, Government reports, budget proposals and other matters to the plenary, as well as issue statements to committees when asked to do so. Committee handling has been called the most important stage of the parliamentary handling of legislative dossiers (Keinänen 2011, 138), as the report adopted by the committee in charge of handling the matter is crucial in that it forms the basis of the first reading in the plenary, when the content of the legislative bill is decided<sup>2</sup> (Holli & Saari 2009, 29).

In general, the committee system has been described as “the backbone of the Eduskunta” and “the *fora* in which the main scrutiny of governmental initiatives takes place” (Raunio & Wiberg 2014, 14). The committees of the Finnish parliament have been listed as one of the most influential committees in Europe as almost all issues handled by the parliament, including all legislative proposals by the Government, have to be prepared in a committee before the issue can be brought to the plenary (Mattila 2014, 119). The committees of the Eduskunta are also amongst the committees of national parliaments that enjoy the most independence in their actions vis-à-vis the Government (Döring 1995, 233-237). The increased use of amendments to legislative

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<sup>2</sup> In the second reading in the plenary, the Parliament only decides whether to accept or reject the bill decided in the first reading.

proposals adopted by the committees in their reports indicates that the stature and independence of the committees vis-à-vis the Government has only increased in recent years (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 65-67), although increased amount of amendments could also be a result of a declining standard in the drafting of laws in the ministries (Holli & Saari 2009, 30).

The true level of influence of a committee is however difficult to ascertain. Beside the committees, parliamentary groups exert their influence on all decisions. As committee memberships are always distributed proportionally according to the number of MPs a parliamentary group has, a majoritarian Government always has a majority in a committee as well as in the plenary. As parties are committed to detailed government platform, this may reduce the incentive for a committee to, for example, make changes to a Government bill. (Mattila 2014, 130.) I will return to the incentives of committee members in the chapter 3.4.

Next I will describe the four committees that are the subjects of this thesis.

The Finance Committee is one of the five permanent committees of the parliament and one of the most respected committees in the Parliament. Membership in the Finance Committee is sought after and difficult for first-term MPs to gain, even though the Finance Committee has the most members of all special committees. The members of the committee are usually highly placed on their parties' seniority. The Finance Committee is divided into separate sub-committees, which are responsible for hearing expert consultations and preparing a report or statement for the whole committee to vote on. (Helander & Pekonen, 2007; Mattila 2014.)

The main task of the Finance Committee is the handling of the state budget. Other issues include long-term budgetary planning and legislation concerning taxes and financial issues. (Eduskunta 2008, 12.) The counterpart ministry of the Finance Committee is the Ministry of Finance. As financial policies have shifted more towards multiannual frameworks during the last decades, the role of the Finance Committee, and its budgetary power, has also changed. For the most part, the change has favoured the executive (Vainio 2007, 211-220). The increased role of European Economic Governance has lessened the budgetary autonomy of the Member States, and indirectly,

the Finance Committee as well (Tuori & Tuori 2014, 10), but at the same time European issues have become more salient in the work of the Committee.

The Administration Committee was created in 1991, after a previous committee, the Law and Commerce Committee, was disbanded in the committee reform of 1990. It is responsible for handling issues relating to public administration, and especially issues on the administration of municipalities. Its counterpart ministry is the Ministry of the Interior, but partly also the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Education and Culture. (Vainio 2007, 193-194.)

The Agriculture and Forestry Committee has existed since the foundation of the Parliament of Finland and handles issues relating to the industrial and commercial policies of agriculture and forestry (where many issues touch upon regional policy) as well as matters on foodstuff, animals, fishing and hunting. The Committee has been very active regarding EU legislation, maintaining close contact with its counterpart ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, in order to gain up-to-date information on EU decision-making. (Vainio 2007, 197-199.)

The area of responsibility of the Commerce Committee can be categorised generally as business policy, including energy, competition and the stock market, but the committee is also responsible for the implementation of the majority of the legislation on the Single Market and overseeing the Bank of Finland. The counterpart ministry of the committee is the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, but partly also the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice. The origins of the Commerce Committee can be traced beyond the Parliament of Finland into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the broadness of the policy fields the committee handles it is also one of the busiest committees in the Parliament. (Vainio 2007, 202-206.)

What combines the four committees is that European legislation plays in an important role in all of their respective policy fields. Of all the committees in the Parliament of Finland, the Finance, Administration, Agriculture and Forestry and Commerce Committees have adopted the most statements or reports on European issues during Finland's membership to the EU (Eduskunta 2012a; Eduskunta 2012b), which not only exhibits the prevalence of EU legislation in their fields but also the activity of the committees in question regarding European legislation. Committees of the Parliament

are not forced to adopt statements or reports on E or U communications, even if such communications are directed to them. Committees can simply record a communication as noted, without taking any further measures. This provides them to be interesting research subjects when researching committees in the light of EU decision-making.

Along with being diverse regarding their respective policy fields, the four committees vary also greatly in the hierarchy of the committees of the Eduskunta. Forstén (2005, 127-130) categorises the committees of the Eduskunta into three categories according to their hierarchy: elite committees, occupational committees and committees of the incoming MPs. The Finance Committee is placed in the first category, the Agriculture and Forestry, and Administration Committees in the second category, while the Commerce committee is located in the third category. In the study by Wiberg and Mattila (1997) the ranking of three of the committees is the same, except for the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, which is included in the top tier (Holli & Saari 2009, 33; Mattila 2014, 124). The four committees represent committees from the top of the hierarchy to the lowest level, although recent interviews with parliamentary group chairpersons demonstrate a growing respect for the Commerce Committee (Yle 2015).

Next I will provide a review on the previous studies on expert consultations of the standing committees in the Parliament of Finland and explain particularities of the four committees regarding expert consultations.

## **2.2 Consultation of Experts in the Committees of the Eduskunta**

Committee handling is divided into three stages: information gathering, debate and decision-making (Holli & Saari 2009, 28). Expert consultations form one of the key stages of committee handling, and are an essential method of information gathering, on which the work of the committees relies on (Vainio 2007, 186). Relating to the principal-agent model, committee hearings and expert consultations are a crucial mechanism in monitoring the Government and of gaining knowledge on the actions of the executive branch and of the reasoning behind those actions.

A committee can ask an expert to give an oral or a written statement. The Parliament encourages the committees to first call on the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter at hand, followed by others involved in the preparatory process and

experts, whom are to be affected by the matter or who have knowledge on the issue (Eduskunta 2008, 83-84).<sup>3</sup>

The committees are entirely free to decide by themselves which and how many experts they wish to call on to committee hearings, or if they wish to proceed without hearing any experts. In its guidelines, the Parliament only stresses that committee members should not unduly delay the proceeding in the committee, for example, by needlessly inviting too many experts than would be required considering the nature of the matter at hand. Committee members should also pay close attention to the costs of inviting experts from abroad, if such experts are considered. (Eduskunta 2008, 84.)

For many years the experts called on by the committee of Eduskunta received little attention in research, but in recent years there has been more research on committee hearings, both qualitative and quantitative, and on the role and influence experts play in the decision-making of committees. I will present these studies next.

Anne Holli and Milja Saari (2009, 47-50) identified four stages in the selection process of experts: 1) compilation of a “basic list” of experts; 2) complementing the list of experts according to the wishes of MPs; 3) calling on additional experts on the basis of previous statements; 4) calling on additional experts based on the activity of interest groups. The role of the secretariat of the committee is vital especially in the first stage, which is almost without exception handled solely by civil servants. The MPs, who are more involved in the latter stages, may request any relevant experts they wish to be called on, and their request are usually automatically complied with.

The decisions over experts called on to committee meetings are usually taken democratically, with committee members either voting on which experts to be consulted, or more often, with all of the experts requested by members invited to give a statement. According to committee chairpersons and civil servants of committee secretariats even an ordinary committee member can have significant power over the experts consulted by a committee, although committee chairpersons, civil servants of the secretariat and “leading personas” of the committee wield the most influence. (Ahtonen et al 2011, 117-121.)

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive summary of the process of inviting experts to committee hearings see Holli & Saari 2009, 45-54.

Anssi Keinänen (2011) researched the actual influence expert consultations have on committee decision. He answered his research question, “to whom committees *actually* listen to during committee handling”, by researching the levels of influence different types of experts have on the final position of a committee via a questionnaire and comparison methods. He found that the views of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter as well as the views of independent experts, such as researchers and professors had the most influence. Representatives of other ministries were found to have some influence, whereas representatives of the business and labour organisations, and to some extent civic organisations, rarely had an effect on the final position of a committee, although they were frequently called on to committee hearings.

While there has been no systematic quantitative research on the hearings of the committees of Eduskunta, there have been cross-sectional studies that have focused on the hearings of a particular year of the parliament since the since the 1960s (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 85). These cross-sectional studies include studies by Väinö Huuska (1968), Pertti Ahonen (1980), Voitto Helander and Kyösti Pekonen (2007) as well as Anne Holli with Milja Saari (2009)<sup>4</sup>.

In his book on the pressure politics of Finnish interest groups, Väinö Huuska (1968) studied the expert hearings of the standing committees during 1958-61. The study included all the committees except the Finance Committee and the Grand Committee, as their records did not include the experts that had been heard within the handling of committee reports or statements. Huuska’s study showed that only 8.6 % of all reports and statements by committees had been handled without an expert consultation. On average, the committees heard 2.6 experts per report or statement. Huuska categorised the experts to three groups: representatives of government agencies and institutions (45.5 % of experts); private persons (27.4 %) and other organisations (27.1 %). (Huuska 1968, 61-67; Helander & Pekonen 2007, 85-86.)

As part of his study on the flow of information between the central government and the Parliament, Pertti Ahonen (1980) researched the expert hearings of the committees in 1966 and 1978. The study, like Huuska’s previously, did not include the Finance and the Grand Committees. Ahonen’s study showed that the amount of experts called to

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<sup>4</sup> Other studies such as Wiberg (2003) and Saari (2012) offer a more in-depth look into expert consultations, either by focusing on a single committee (Wiberg) or on a certain group of experts (Saari).

hearings more than tripled between 1966 and 1978, from 612 to 2107. In 1978 committees heard on average 6 experts per report or statement although the number of experts varied between different committees. (Ahonen 1980, 66-74; Helander & Pekonen 2007, 88.)

Ahonen categorised experts called to the hearings in five categories: ministries; other central governmental or parliamentary institutions and state-owned enterprises; municipal sector; labour market organisations; and others. Of the five groups, ministry officials were used as experts most frequently (29 % in 1966 and 27 % in 1978). The public sector altogether accounted for 63 % of all experts consulted in 1966 and 55 % in 1978. The most significant change during the years 1966 and 1978 in the proportional representation of the five groups was the increased use of labour market organisations in expert hearings. They accounted for only 4 % of experts in 1966 but by 1978 their share had increased to 22 %. (Ahonen 1980, 66-73.)

Voitto Helander and Kyösti Pekonen (2007) conducted a comprehensive study on the committees of Eduskunta, a part of which dealt with the expert hearings of all the committees of the Parliament during the parliamentary season of 2001. In the study, the observation unit is not a single person, as was the case in the previous and later studies, but rather a body that has been called as an expert. A body can be an institution or an organisation called on to a committee hearing and can be represented by more than one person in the hearing. In some cases ministries responsible for a legislative proposal have had more than 10 persons present during a hearing but in the study they are only counted as one unit. In some cases experts have been called to a hearing not as a representative of a body, but as individuals. This has usually been the case with university professors or other researches, and form an observation unit in their own right. (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 89-90.)

Helander and Pekonen noted expert hearings to form a great part of the work of the committees, with the committees hearing in total 3980 experts during the course of the year. When compiling reports, committees heard on average 8 expert bodies whereas the average number of expert bodies heard when compiling statements was 6.7.

Of the committees relevant to the present study, the Administration committee consulted experts the most with 13.0 expert bodies consulted per report and 5.3 per

statement. The other three committees heard between 7 and 5 expert bodies per report and statement. The average number of experts consulted of all the committees in Eduskunta was 8.0 per report and 6.3 per statement. The Finance Committee was the only committee in the Parliament that consulted more expert bodies during its handling of statements than reports. (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 90-91.)

Helander and Pekonen divided the expert bodies into 9 groups: ministries; other governmental organisations; municipalities and regions; trade unions; business organisations; other organisations; corporations; and private persons. Ministries (27.9 % of expert bodies called) and other governmental organisations (22.7 %) amounted to more than half of the expert bodies called on by the committees of the Eduskunta in 2001. Labour market organisations, especially business organisations, were also consulted frequently. (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 90-91.)

Different committees have varying cultures when it comes to expert consultations. During the parliamentary season of 2001, the Environment, Finance, Administration and Legal Affairs Committees depended heavily on the public sector for expert advice. Ministries composed 37,4 % of called expert bodies in the Finance Committee with the public sector altogether amounting to almost two thirds of all bodies called (63.3 %). In the Administration Committee the share of ministries was lower (31.5 %), but the public sector was called on almost as much (62.0 %), as the Administration Committee relied on the municipal sector the second most of all the committees in Parliament (6.3 %). (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 94-98.)

Committees where experts from the third sector and the private sector were called on roughly as often as experts from the public sector included the Transport and Communications Committee, the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, and the Commerce Committee. All of them often called on business organisations and corporations to committee hearings, but their share was highest in the Agriculture and Forestry Committee (35.0 % and 7.5 %, respectively) and the Commerce Committee (29.0 % and 12.8 %, respectively). (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 94-98.)



Anne Maria Holli and Milja Saari (2009) examined the hearings of experts by the committees of the Eduskunta of the parliamentary season of 2005<sup>5</sup>. In their study, Holli and Saari found that the special committees consulted on average 7.7 experts per report or statement (the authors do not differentiate between the two). Of the committees relevant to the present study, the Commerce Committee consulted 6.5 experts, the Finance Committee 7.0 experts, the Administration committee 7.6 experts, and the Agriculture and Forestry Committee 10.8 experts per report or statement. The Education and Culture Committee used the most experts (13.6 experts) while the Foreign Affairs Committee called on the least experts per report or statement (5.0). (Holli & Saari 2009, 58-60.)

Holli and Saari categorise the experts called on to committee hearings in five categories: public sector; private sector [i.e. corporations]; third sector: science, research and learning institutions; and others. The public sector category included all public bodies and politicians. The third sector was made up of all organisations, including labour market and civic organisations. Of all the experts consulted during the committee hearings in 2005, more than half were from the public sector (53.4 %). The second largest group was the third sector (31.0 % of experts) followed by science, research and learning institutions (11.3 %). The private sector amounted to 3.9 % of all experts and others 0.3 %. (Holli & Saari 2009, 64.)

In all of the committees relevant to my study, the public sector had the largest share of experts called. In the Administration Committee 66.8 % of experts hailed from the public sector, followed by the Finance Committee (58.3 %), the Commerce Committee (53.0 %) and the Agriculture and Forestry Committee (46.3 %). The third sector was also heavily used as a source of expert consultation in all of the committees. While the share of the third sector was highest in the Agriculture and Forestry Committee (38.6 %), even in the Administration Committee, where their share was the lowest of all the committees, more than every fourth expert was a representative of the third sector (27.3 %). (Holli & Saari 2009, 66.)

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<sup>5</sup> Holli and Saari have incorporated all experts used in their database, and have not listed experts as bodies or institutions, as Helander and Pekonen (2007) have done. The results of the two studies are therefore not accurately comparable.

The largest differences between the committees in 2005 are evident in the use of corporations and scientists as experts. Whereas 9.1 % of experts called on by the Commerce Committee were representatives of corporations, their share in the Administration Committee, which handles mostly public legislation, was virtually non-existent (0.2 %). Of the four committees, the Agriculture and Forestry Committee used scientists and researchers as experts the most (10.6 %), followed by the Commerce Committee (6.7 %), the Administration Committee (5.6 %) and the Finance Committee (3.9 %). (Holli & Saari 2009, 66.)

It is evident from the above-mentioned studies that although the Parliament has made a conscious effort in trying to limit the use of experts (Helander & Pekonen 2007, 90), the use of expert consultations has increased throughout decades, at least since the 1960s. When during the years 1958 to 1961 the committees consulted on average 2.6 experts per statement or report, the number of consultations increased to 7.7 experts per report or statement in 2005. The majority of increase appears to have happened during the 1960s and the 1970s.

As shown above, the four committees of this study have differences in the policy fields they are responsible for and in the experts the committees use in their hearings. The main policy fields of the Finance and Administration Committees relate to public administration, whereas the Commerce and Agriculture and Forestry Committees are more responsible for legislation on the private economy. The experts used by the committees, as exhibited by previous studies, reflect these differences. The Finance and Administration Committees call on the public sector for consultation more often, whereas in the other two committees the share of the private sector, both organisations and corporations, is higher.

As well as being active committees in terms of European integration, the four committees also provide for a more extensive view on expert consultations in national and European issues than studying only committees whose policy fields would consist only of either the public sector or the private sector.

Next I will turn my attention to the practice of scrutiny performed by the Parliament of Finland in European integration. I will explain the characteristics and practicalities of the system of scrutiny and briefly reflect on its strengths and weaknesses.

## **2.3 Eduskunta and European integration**

National parliaments have received extensive attention in academic studies of European integration throughout the 1990s and the 2000s. The attention was sparked by the debate on the democratic deficit in the EU, and also by studies conducted during the 1990s, which showed national parliaments to be largely ineffective or uninterested in controlling their governments over EU affairs (Raunio 2009, 317).

It has been proposed that national parliaments have been the “losers” (Maurer & Wessels 2001a) and “victims” (O’Brennan & Raunio 2007) of European integration, and that they have lost legislative power to the executive branch: national governments, the Council of the European Union, the European Council and the European Commission without the European Parliament being able to compensate for the losses of power (Føllesdaal & Hix 2006; Crum & Fossum 2009, 251). As national parliaments have been heavily involved in the founding and development of the European Union, they have themselves played a part in reducing their own influence over policy decisions (Maurer 2001, 37-38).

This was especially the case during the 1980s and early 1990s when integration spread to new policy areas but national parliaments failed to respond to the changes. National parliaments have gradually responded to the new situation through procedural reforms and other modifications to the relationships between parliaments and other national institutions and exercise a much tighter scrutiny of EU affairs now than during the 1990s and early 2000s (Winzen 2012; Raunio 2009, 318).

### **2.3.1 Scrutiny of European Matters**

The Finnish Eduskunta, along with the Danish parliament, has often been raised as one of the best examples on how to organise scrutiny of EU affairs. Comparative studies on systems of scrutiny in EU member states have usually listed the Finnish model as one of the most efficient systems of scrutiny (see Winzen 2012, Raunio 2005, 324; Maurer & Wessels 2001b, 461-463; Bergman 2000.)

Research on the level influence of the Parliament of Finland has proved that the Parliament can influence the position taken by Finland on European issues and that the positions of the Parliament are reflected in the Governments actions and even on the

eventual EU-level legislation (Kymäläinen 2010, 63; Veistämö 2004, 73). Active scrutiny by the Parliament can at a minimum be seen to have contained the rise of the influence of the Government and of the civil servants (Raunio 2007, 242).

The relationship between the Finnish parliament and the government over EU affairs is similar to that of any other field of governing: the government must have the confidence of the parliament at all times and the government must keep the parliament informed on the preparation of matters in the European Union. The government must also hear the parliament's views on the proposals being discussed in the EU and must explain and justify the policies it adopts within the EU. (Jääskeläinen 2000, 116.)

The system of parliamentary involvement was originally devised in the early 1990s before the founding of, and Finland's accession to, the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992. It was designed to work as a compensation procedure for the losses of power that the parliament would face. The procedure created for the EEA was maintained as such after Finland's accession to the EU in 1995, so that it encompassed all EU policy areas as well. With the introduction of the compensation procedure, the Parliament was to be as involved with the handling of EU affairs as much as possible. The Government is responsible for informing the Parliament on all EU issues within the jurisdiction of the Parliament at once. (Vainio 2007, 154.) The Danish parliament, *Folketinget*, was one of the models on which the Finnish system was based on, especially regarding the role of the Grand Committee (Raunio 2007, 229).

There has been an emphasis in Finland to try to influence EU decision-making as early as possible, before the actual proposal for legislation by the Commission is published, as this has been seen as the most efficient way of influence (cf. Government Reports on EU Policy 2009 & 2013; Eduskunta, 2010). According to this guideline, the Parliament should try to be as involved as possible during the early stages of preparation in the Commission, before the actual proposal for legislation is published. The Finnish system of parliamentary involvement indeed focuses on incorporating the parliament at an early stage of the legislative process at the European level, and not only at the later stages of Council decision-making (Jääskeläinen 2000, 121; Raunio 2007, 229).

The handling of EU affairs in the parliament has been entrusted almost solely to the committees, and EU affairs are rarely debated in plenary. The most important task of

parliamentary handling of EU affairs is to ensure that the Parliament has a proper say in EU decision-making and that parliamentary scrutiny is effective in this regard. The Grand Committee functions as the European Affairs Committee in the Finnish Parliament. (Helander & Pekonen, 2007.)

In the handling of EU affairs in the Parliament, proposals for EU legislation that would fall within the scope of the Parliament's powers were it not for the EU, are listed as Union communications, or U-communications. They are forwarded by the Speaker to one or more standing committees as well as the Grand Committee. The special committees can issue a statement to the Grand Committee, where the final position of the parliament is decided. Matters related to foreign and security policy are handled in the Foreign Affairs Committee instead of the Grand Committee. The role of the special committees is strong, as the Grand Committee's final position usually parallels the statement of the special committee. The positions of the Parliament are politically binding. (Jääskeläinen 2000; Raunio 2014.)

The Government also submits to the Parliament other types of information on EU affairs, which are listed as Europe communications, or E-communications. These include, among others, general reports on EU policies; legislation that falls outside the parliament's powers; information on Council and European Council meetings (both *ex ante* and *ex post*); and working documents submitted to the government by the Commission, including Green and White papers. E-communications are forwarded to the Grand Committee, which may, and almost always does, forward them to one or several special committees for information, when deemed appropriate. The special committees may issue a statement to the Grand Committee on the E-communication. (Helander & Pekonen 2007.)

Before attending Council or European Council meetings, ministers or the Prime Minister, respectively, inform the Grand Committee of the items on the agenda and of the positions of the representatives of Finland. The positions submitted by the Government to the Grand Committee must be in conformity with the positions of the Parliament adopted during any previous handlings E- and U-communications of the same issue. Ministers always report to the Grand Committee after each Council or European Council meeting on decisions taken in the meeting and of the discussion that occurred. The hearing of the ministers before Council meetings is the final stage of the

handling of EU affairs, where it is ensured that the Parliament's position has been adhered to. (Vainio 2007, 249; Hageland 2007, 108.)

Ministers do not regularly appear before the special committees, but rather only before the European Affairs Committee, unless specifically called on by a special committee. The Grand Committee is in charge of expressing the will of the Parliament and ensuring the compliance with the Parliament's position. Some special committees, such as the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, hold weekly sessions with their corresponding ministry, in order to keep track of on-going EU issues. A study on the committees of the Finnish Parliament noted that focusing solely on the handling of U-communications would be a reactive activity, and would only lead to a weakening of the influence of the committees (Vainio 2007, 250).

EU legislation that requires the parliament to approve them or to enact legislation, i.e. that requires national implementation, is enacted in the normal procedure. The Government presents the proposed legislation in the form of a Government bill. The bill is referred to a committee after a preliminary debate in the plenary. Other special committees may be asked to submit a statement to the leading committee, when deemed appropriate. As opposed to committee work on EU issues and EU legislation before their adoption, the Grand Committee is rarely involved at this stage. After the leading committee has agreed on a report on the bill, the bill returns to the plenary, where it is handled in two readings. In the first reading the content of the bill is decided section by section. In the second reading the bill is either approved or rejected. (Helander & Pekonen 2007.)

EU affairs are handled according to the same protocol as national issues in special committees. When discussing an issue, or formulating a report or a statement, a committee can, and almost always does, call on experts to committee hearings on the matter at hand. The hearings take place behind closed doors, as do all committee meetings, except in very rare circumstances where a public hearing is ordered, but the written statements of the experts are made public, if one has been provided.

### 2.3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses

Jääskinen and Kivisaari (1997) have summarised the main strengths of the Finnish system of parliamentary scrutiny. The system has its legal basis in the constitution, which strengthens the judicial justification of the process. The Parliament is involved at an early stage of the EU legislative process, and the involvement includes the special committees, not just the Grand Committee, working as the European Affairs Committee. The Parliament also enjoys an unlimited right to information on EU documents, and it can ask for the Government to supply it with the documents it requires. The systematic *ex ante* and *ex post* reporting of Council and European Council meetings and of the decisions made in the meetings are also seen to enhance the system of scrutiny.

Tapio Raunio (2007, 247) lists the “decentralisation” of scrutiny to special committees, instead of handling all EU-related matters in the Grand Committee as the most important characteristic of the Finnish method of scrutiny. Cross-national studies on parliamentary scrutiny have also shown that parliaments that use their committees extensively are stronger in their scrutiny of the government (O’Brennan & Raunio 2007b, 7).

Previous research (see Raunio 2007, 247) has indicated that only a minority of MPs are truly interested in EU affairs. MPs also seem uninterested in requesting experts to committee hearings on European issues. Experts to the first committee hearing are customarily called on by the committee secretariat, not the MPs, and committee members seem uninterested in calling on further experts to committee hearings in most cases. Although different authors have raised the issue in passing, it has never been systematically researched. One of the aims of this study is to provide a thorough analysis on the matter.

Throughout Finland’s membership to the EU, information received by the Parliament has been an issue. When compared to the Government and the civil servants of the ministries, national parliaments are inevitably always “a step behind”. Ministers and civil servants are the ones who negotiate new policies at the EU level and have the best knowledge on new proposals. MPs working in the Member States are largely dependent on the information they receive from civil servants and other actors as they are rarely, if

ever, present in the negotiations themselves. (Raunio 1999.) As direct control of the executive branch is more difficult when dealing with European affairs than national affairs, merely due to the distance, other methods of monitoring, such as the hearing and consulting of interested third parties, could be strengthened.

The Parliament's work on EU affairs is largely linked to information it receives from the Government. The Parliament can only start to formally process a proposal after it has received a U- or an E-communication from the Government. Much of the influence the Eduskunta can exert depends on it being able to have a say as early in the legislative process as possible. A report published in 2010 (Eduskunta 2010) by a working group composed of Members of Parliament and parliamentary civil servants addressed a problem in the Parliament's ability to influence decision-making in the early stages of the legislative process. According to the report, the Parliament can only exert its influence when it takes action when the actual decision-making at the European-level takes place. The Parliament has to declare its position before a decision has already reached at the European level if it is to have influence over decision-making. The issue of timing has been brought up by other studies as well (see Raunio 2007, 242; Hyvärinen 2009, Jääskeläinen 2000, 121; Lampinen & Räsänen 1998, 130) as well as the Grand Committee since the beginning of Finland's membership to the EU (SuVL 3/1995 vp).

While the Parliament enjoys unlimited access to information as per the constitution, there is no requisite that all EU related information should be automatically sent to the Parliament. Instead, information will only be submitted for a reason: if the Parliament has original competence (U-communication), because a committee asks for information or because the government believes the matter should be submitted to the Parliament. (Eduskunta 2005, 21.) Much of what the Parliament can achieve is therefore dependent on the activeness of MPs and the committees as well as on the actions of the Government and the ministries. It has been shown that close interaction, official or unofficial, between a committee and its respective ministry will better the quality and quantity of information received by the committee (Lampinen & Räsänen 1998, 128).

The volume and complexity of EU-related documents delivered to the Parliament has also been seen to cause problems in the past. MPs have been critical of the information they receive from ministries, arguing it to be sometimes defective and diffuse



(Eduskunta 2005, 75; Boedecker & Uusikylä 2000). This, in addition to time constraints, as information on EU proposals only reaches the Parliament some weeks before the matter is dealt with in the Council, and the sheer volume of the information make it difficult for the committees to properly engage in the subject (Raunio 2007, 244). As a result, MPs have had difficulties in locating the most essential and politically important contents of proposals (Veistämö 2004, 74).

To summarise, the committees of the Parliament of Finland have an important role in the parliamentary process. While in most matters decisions are ultimately made in the plenary, the committees are the ones who are primarily responsible for the handling of legislative proposals and reports submitted to the Parliament by the Government. The work of the plenary is based on the reports and statements adopted in the committees.

During the handling of European affairs, scrutiny of the executive is handled almost exclusively through the work of the committees. During the handling of U- and E-communications the Grand Committee decides the final position of the Parliament, usually paralleling the position(s) of the special committee(s) who have submitted statements to the Grand Committee. The objective of the Finnish system of scrutiny is to involve the Parliament at an early stage of the decision-making process at the EU-level.

Committee work can be divided into three stages, and this thesis is focused on the first of those, information gathering. Committee hearings provide the committee members, and through them, the entire Parliament, an important method of information gathering. The number of expert consultations in the committee has risen throughout the decades. The opinions of the experts called on to committee hearings have been shown to be valued by the committee members, and their influence on the final positions of the committees have been shown in previous studies.

Having introduced the committees of the Parliament of Finland, their role in the political process and their importance in the work of the Parliament, I will turn to the theoretical framework of the thesis in the next chapter.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of the study rests on the previous studies of committees of national parliaments, especially on the principal-agent relationship between the Parliament or its committees, and the Government or its ministers.

In this chapter I will first present an overview of the principal-agent theory and define the concept of delegation and the reasoning behind the delegation from principals to agents. I will continue with a description of the risks delegation entails and the methods used by principals to alleviate those risks. I will then locate parliamentary committees in the theoretical framework and end the chapter by discussing the incentives for scrutiny and monitoring committee members have in their role as principals.

#### **3.1 Principal-Agent Theory**

The principal-agent theory defines institutions “as structures of relationships between principals and agents” (Peters 2012, 60). Developed in the US, it has become the standard framework in the research of the formulation of regulatory policies between the Congress and independent regulatory commissions (ibid, 56-57).

The principal-agent theory has also been successfully used in the study of European parliaments in the past, and it has been proven to be a useful tool in understanding both the functions of parliaments and the relationship between the legislative and the executive branches (see for example Strøm, Müller & Bergman 2003, Döring 1995), as it allows “a systematic and encompassing study of parliamentary accountability” (Saalfeld 2000, 373). A principal-agent framework has also been successfully applied in the study of national parliamentary scrutiny of European affairs (cf. Karlas 2012).

The principal-agent-theory has also been used in studies of the Finnish Parliament (see Raunio & Wiberg 2003), but its use in the study of the role of the Eduskunta in the handling of EU affairs in Finland has not been extensive. In the previous application of the principal-agent theory the theory has been applied primarily to the situation before the entering into force of the new constitution in 2000 (ibid, 301), which strengthened parliamentarism and provided the parliament with a more influential role (Raunio & Wiberg 2014, 7). Finnish studies on the role of the Parliament in the handling of EU affairs have also focused heavily on the Grand Committee, which functions as the

European Affairs Committee (EAC) of the Parliament. Special committees of the Parliament have received less attention in the research of the Parliament's involvement in European affairs.

Besides the principal-agent theory, the committees of the Eduskunta and expert consultations of the committees have been researched through other standpoints as well. These standpoints have included gender (Holli & Saari 2009); interest groups (Saari 2012); deliberative democratic theory and party politics (Rinne 2010) and power (Liukkonen 2013).

The principal-agent theory is one of the most used theoretical frameworks in the study of parliamentary committees, and its explanatory power on parliamentary committees has been demonstrated in many publications. Regardless of this, the use of the principal-agent theory in the research on the handling of European affairs in the committee of the Parliament of Finland has been lacking. It is for these reasons that this study concentrates on the special committees, and on the functions they serve in the handling of European issues in the parliament, through the application of the principal-agent theory.

### **3.2 Delegation**

Before venturing forward, there is a need to clearly define some of the key concepts of this study: delegation, principal and agent. In this study I will use Arthur Lupia's definition of delegation "as an act where one person or group, called a *principal* relies on another person or group, called an *agent*, to act on the principal's behalf" (Lupia 2003, 33). The rationale behind delegation is that it allows organisations to specialise and principals to fulfil their tasks at reduced costs in time and money (Strøm 1995, 60). The use of delegation, and the extent and scope of its use have only increased in democratic systems, as the need for specialisation has intensified in modern societies leading to a substantial transfer of authority from the legislative to the executive (Martin & Vanberg 2004, 14).

In a parliamentary democracy, delegation usually works as a chain, starting from voter, the ultimate principal, to his or her agent, a Member of Parliament. Müller et al. (2003, 20) have composed a chain of delegation in parliamentary government, which includes at least four discrete steps:

1. Delegation from voters to their elected representatives
2. Delegation from legislators to the executive branch, specifically to the head of government (the Prime Minister).
3. Delegation from the head of government (Prime Minister) to the heads of different executive departments.
4. Delegation from the heads of different executive departments to civil servants.

A corresponding chain of *accountability* running in the opposite direction mirrors the chain of delegation. Accountability is defined in this study as “the ability of the principal to exercise control over the agent” (Lupia 2003, 35).

The above description is a simplification, and does not perfectly correlate with the steps of delegation in Finland. Although the Parliament does delegate powers primarily to the head of the executive, the Prime Minister, a direct delegation also occurs between the Parliament and all the ministers of the Government. Individual ministers can also be given a vote of no confidence (Constitution of Finland, art. 43), and individual ministers are then directly dependent on the confidence of the Parliament as well, not just the Prime Minister or the Government as a whole.

When researching the delegation between the Parliament and the Government of Finland, focusing on the relationship between the Parliament and the Prime Minister is not sufficient. We need to also observe the relationship between the parliament (and its committees) and individual ministers (and their ministries). In parliamentary systems much of the oversight that the Parliament is responsible for has been delegated to the committees, who are in charge for overseeing their respective ministries in more detail than would be possible for the plenary.

Due to individual ministers being directly accountable to the Parliament, the division between steps two and three become indistinct in terms of the parliament-government-relationship. The collegiate working methods of the cabinet in Finland (Wiberg & Raunio 2014, 313) also obscure the distinction. Ministers have multiple principals as they are not accountable only to the Prime Minister, but also to the Parliament, to other ministers, and to their own parties (Strøm et al. 2010, 519). Due to the scope of the study, it is not possible for me to go into detail on the differences of accountability between the different principals, or focus on the influence of political parties.

I do also acknowledge that delegation from a parliament to a government to hold many chains of delegations, many of which happen within institutions, such as the delegation from a parliament as a whole, to its committees, or those within cabinet. But, for the same reason, the scope of the thesis, I will also not make a clear distinction between the types of delegation by separating delegations of a) the Parliament or its b) parliamentary committees to the i) Government as a whole, ii) the Prime Minister, or to iii) individual ministers by analysing them all separately. In order to be coherent and also for the sake of brevity, I will rather treat the delegation from the Parliament to Government as a single process.

Having explained the chain of delegation, and located in which steps the interest of this study lay, I now turn my attention to the risks of delegation with a view on parliamentary committees.

### **3.3 Risks of Delegation**

There are inherent risks to delegation under parliamentary democracy, one of which is *agency loss*. Agency loss is the “difference between the actual consequence of delegation and what the consequence would have been had the agent been ‘perfect’”. A “perfect agent” is a concept of a hypothetical agent who does what the principal would have done, if the principal would have unlimited information and resources to do the task him/herself. It must be noted that principals normally do not have unlimited information and resources at their disposal, making it impossible for even them to act as perfect agents for themselves. (Lupia 2003, 35.)

Agency loss can occur due to asymmetric information in favour of the agent. In a delegation between the legislative and the executive, the latter is usually in a better position regarding information, with the Parliament lacking reliable information. The agent may, unbeknownst to the principal, pursue his or her own policy preferences even when they differ from the preferences of the principal. The agent may also use the delegation, and political power received through it, to gain personal advantages. (Strøm et al. 2010, 519.) As I will explain later, information asymmetry is usually even more significant in European affairs than in domestic issues.

Asymmetric information can lead to *adverse selection* or *moral hazard*. Adverse selection can occur when a principal does not fully know the competencies and

preferences of their agents or the demands of the task at hand (hidden information) and chooses the wrong agent in the first place. Moral hazard can occur when a principal cannot or will not fully observe or monitor the actions of their agents (hidden action) and is therefore unable to keep the agent honest and diligent. (Müller et al. 2003, 23; Lupia 2003, 41; Saalfeld 2000, 355; Strøm 2003, 62-63.)

Adverse selection is easiest to comprehend in terms of the first step of delegation, between a voter and an MP, especially in a Westminster parliamentary system, with a single representative representing an electoral constituency. Adverse selection occurs when a voter chooses an MP, who once elected, does not promote the preferences of that particular voter. Its role is less direct in the delegation between a parliament and a government. Ministerial appointments in most parliamentary systems are handled by parties of the Government themselves (Saalfeld 2000, 356). Although MPs have a right to dismiss a government, or even individual ministers in the case of Finland, in most parliamentary democracies MPs do not hold the primary responsibility for the appointment of ministers. In Finland the appointment of ministers is decided completely by the leaders of government parties (Raunio & Wiberg 2003, 307).

Adverse selection can therefore play a significant role in agency loss between the Parliament and the Government, but MPs, other than those of the party of a minister, have little possibilities of preventing it. When a minister is in office, the Parliament has a possibility of a vote of no confidence if the minister veers too far from the views of the majority of the Parliament. A more likely scenario is however a shuffling of the cabinet performed by a leader of the party in question<sup>6</sup>, where the influence of the Parliament is indirect at best.

Moral hazard on the other hand is something that MPs can directly affect. First we must make it clear that a principal lacking information at the moment of delegation is by itself not sufficient to cause agency loss. What matters more is whether or not a principal can and will, during the course of the delegation, learn enough of the agent

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<sup>6</sup> It is customary in Finland for leaders of the parties in Government to perform a shuffling of ministers during the 4-year parliamentary term. In the parliamentary term in question (2011-2015) of the 19 ministers appointed during the inauguration of the Government only 5 remained ministers for the entire duration of the parliamentary term. Only 4 ministers held the same role for the entire duration of the parliamentary term. Not all changes can be attributed to cabinet shuffling. 4 ministerial changes resulted from the Greens and the Left Alliance leaving the Government, and 3 changes were a direct result of changes in party leadership of the governing parties.

and his or her actions to be able to effectively use whatever power the principal has over the agent. One means of gaining enough knowledge is through institutions, as they can be designed in such a way as to grant the principle more information on the agent. Mechanisms of accountability are of major importance here. (Lupia 2003, 43-45.)

Accountability between the executive and the parliament cannot depend solely on the obligation that the executive serves the will of the majority of the parliament. Suitable mechanisms have to be created, through which the parliament can determinate that the will of the majority of the parliament does indeed occur, and that accountability does indeed exist (Strøm et al. 2010, 518). There are both *ex ante* and *ex post* mechanisms that help a principal to limit agency loss<sup>7</sup>.

Ex ante mechanisms work best when preventing adverse selection as they are employed before an agent is appointed. The three most important forms of ex ante control are screening, selection rules and contract design (Kiewiet & McCubbins 1991, 26-31). A good example of a screening mechanism is a competition, where potential agents compete for the right to be an agent, with the principal allowed to select the most suitable one. Selection rules narrow the list of potential agents by excluding unqualified agents, for example by use of educational requirements. Contract design seeks to establish shared interests or an incentive so that the agent will also profit from the principal's gain. For these mechanisms to be effective, it is required that the principal has previous knowledge of the issue that is being delegated and of the agents, and that the institutional structure enables the use of such mechanisms. (Lupia 2003, 45-46, Müller et al. 2003, 27-31 Strøm 1995, 61.)

While both of *ex ante* and *ex post* mechanisms are used to achieve accountability, there are some indications that the effectiveness of *ex ante* mechanisms has reduced in recent decades, and that parliaments have turned their attention more towards the use of *ex post* mechanisms (Saalfeld 2000, 374). Control through *ex ante* mechanisms is particularly troublesome when controlling coalition governments, and accountability in coalition governments is primarily ensured through the use of *ex post* mechanisms (Strøm et al. 2010, 521).

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<sup>7</sup> Some of the different actions national parliaments may make use of in terms of *ex ante* or *ex post* mechanisms can be covered only briefly here. For a more extensive list and an examination of cross-national variations see Saalfeld 2000, 355-372.

The two main *ex post* mechanisms are monitoring and reporting requirements, and institutional checks (Kiewiet & McCubbins 1991, 31-35). Furthermore, Lupia (2003, 45-51) distinguishes between three types of ways for a principal to gather information through monitoring and reporting, which enable the principal to learn information about the agent's actions that the principal might not otherwise receive, and are thus a way to deal with moral hazard problems. These types are 1) direct monitoring; 2) attending to what the agent says about his or her activities and 3) attending to third party testimony about the agent's actions. Types two and three require less of the principal's time and effort, but can lead to a loss of trustworthiness, as information provided can be inaccurate. A principal can also use institutional checks to control the agent. When utilising institutional checks, the principal delegates power to one or more additional agent(s), who have the power to veto or block decisions made by other agents (Kiewiet & McCubbins 1991, 33-35; Müller & Meyer 2010, 1069).

All of the three types of information gathering presented by Lupia are used in a parliamentary committee setting. As an example, we can review the handling of a legislative dossier, a Government bill in the Finnish context, where the government proposes a new law for the parliament. During the course of the preparation work for a legislative proposal, MPs can monitor the executive directly, for example through the use of documents made available to the committee by the Government by requirements of the law. After a bill is sent to the Parliament, representatives of the executive, ministers and civil servants alike, can and usually are called on to a committee hearing, where they present the Government bill to the committee and answer questions from the MPs. This covers the second method, as the agent has to explain his or her activities to the principal. MPs can, and almost without exception do, also consult experts in committee hearings in order to gain a third party view. Third party experts usually include members of organisations that have collaborated with the executive during the preparation of the Government bill and other parties who may provide the committee with additional information of the issue and the proceedings, including those whom the legislation would affect.

Related to the effectiveness of *ex post* mechanisms portrayed above, McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) list two possible ways of oversight: fire-alarm and police-patrol. A police patrol oversight is centralised, active and direct, where the principal itself is



responsible for control by means of reading documents, commissioning studies, holding hearings, and other methods (Ibid, 166). When combined with Lupia's categorisation of information gathering, police patrol oversight would correspond roughly with types one, direct monitoring, and two, attending to what the agent says about his or her activities.

A fire alarm oversight relies more on other interested actors for oversight, much like Lupia's third type of information gathering. These actors can be other agents, which is usually the case in political systems with multiple institutional checks, or those who would be affected by decisions of an agent (Ibid, 166). In fire alarm oversight a system of rules, procedures and practices is created, which enable citizens, interest groups, and for example the ombudsman or lobbyists (Saalfeld 2000, 371-372), to be of assistance to the principal - the parliament or a committee in this case. This system enables access to information to third-party actors on the actions of agents and provides them with tools with which to challenge the decisions of agents. The role of the parliament, or a committee in this type of oversight is to create and facilitate the system and intervene in the actions of the agent when deemed necessary. (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984, 166-167.)

McCubbins and Schwartz argue a fire alarm oversight to be preferable due to its effectiveness as it consumes less of the principal's time and resources thus allowing for a more extensive oversight (ibid, 167-169). When utilising police-patrol oversight, the amount of information received can also be a problem. Principals must be able to examine the information received, which can be a problem as the amount of information received through direct monitoring and reporting can be immense, causing the principals to "drown in a sea of it" (Kiewiet & McCubbins 1991, 31). The dependence on fire alarm oversight may however lead to a reduction on reliability of the information received (Strøm et al. 2010, 522). It is worth noting that police-patrol and fire-alarm oversight are not mutually exclusive, and can be used concurrently.

### **3.4 The Role of Committees in Delegation**

The committees of parliaments have a two-way role in the chain of delegation. They function as internal agents, when the Members of a Parliament delegate many of the functions of the Parliament relating a specific policy field to certain group of MPs. This division of labour allows for specialisation of the MPs, usually in policy areas where the

previous experience of MPs can be made good use of. This helps the parliaments to combat the information asymmetry vis-à-vis their governments. (Strøm 1995, 61-67.)

Committees also function as principals, as they are also responsible for the overseeing and control of the executive, to whom the parliament has also delegated its powers (Mattson & Strøm 1995). The relevance of the committees in the delegation between the legislative and executive branches is clear. Specialised committees have been called as “probably the most critical feature of legislative organisation for monitoring purposes” (Strøm 1995, 77), and “the single most important institutional means of monitoring and information acquisition” (Saalfeld 2000, 367).

What makes committee so vital to the monitoring performed by parliaments is indeed the specialisation of the MPs. Whereas ministers are responsible for only a specific policy field, Members of Parliament, especially when operating at the plenary, do not have the privilege of specialisation. Instead the role of an MP is to be a jack-of-all-trades. In parliaments with strong committee systems, such as the Finnish Parliament, committees reduce that disproportion of knowledge and expertise between the government by allowing MPs to concentrate their efforts on certain specific policy fields (Saalfeld 2000, 367).

### **3.4.1 Mechanisms of Oversight by the Committees**

Even though almost all parliaments rely on their committees for much of the actual exercise of control of the Government, there are differences between the extent parliaments have delegated the scrutiny of the executive to the committees, as well in the methods parliaments and committees use to exert their control over the executive.

As explained above, committees can use *ex ante* and *ex post* mechanisms when overseeing the executive. Some parliaments, such as the parliaments of Ireland and the United Kingdom favour *ex ante* mechanisms, while the Parliament of Finland, along with the parliaments Netherlands and Sweden have been recognised as ones where *ex post* mechanisms receive more attention and have the greatest influence (Saalfeld 2000, 374). The committees of the Parliament of Finland are not directly involved in the formulation of the Government programme or in the appointment of ministers, which are controlled by the parties in government, nor do the prospective ministers appear before the committees before their appointment.

The committees of the Parliament of Finland hold little power in any of the *ex ante* mechanisms: screening, selection rules or contract design. Leaders of the government parties are in total control over the appointment of ministers (Raunio & Wiberg 2003, 307), and no investiture vote is required (Bergman et al. 2003, 150). The work of the committees is directed towards the *ex post* mechanisms, as these are the mechanisms that I will also be interested in this thesis, especially to the control and monitoring of the Government. While (multiple) institutional checks are usually employed in political systems with federalist political cultures<sup>8</sup>, they are not heavily used in the parliamentary democracies (Strøm et al. 2010, 518), such as Finland.

As discussed in chapter 2, committees of national parliaments, such as the Eduskunta, face certain difficulties in monitoring their governments and ensuring accountability over European affairs. It has been argued that the democratic deficit of the EU derives from an accountability deficit, where “the people feel they are not in control of the institutions of the Union or that their views are not fully taken into consideration” (MacCarthaigh 2007, 30). As European legislation is not dependent on the functions of a single national parliament, especially since the use of the qualified-majority-voting has increased after recent Treaty changes, committees face more severe time restrictions when dealing with European matters than with national matters. The complexity of EU legislation has also been raised as a problem for the committees.

The time constraints and complexity of issues handled might reduce the possibility and effectiveness of the monitoring of the Government performed by the MPs. The physical distance and lack of interaction with the decision-makers operating in Brussels and Luxembourg, regardless of whether they are national civil servants or actors from other Member States, will likely further complicate direct control.

A possible solution to the problem could be the increased use of fire-alarm oversight. According to McCubbins and Schwartz (1984), fire-alarm oversight is preferable to police-patrol oversight due to it being more cost-effective. As control through direct monitoring becomes more difficult and more costly, as would appear to be the case with European affairs, the advantages of fire-alarm oversight become even more tangible.

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<sup>8</sup> The standard example of such a system is the United States.

If committees would resort more to the use of other agents and third parties, it could be visible in the data of this study as an increase in the number of expert consultations as well as in the composition of experts called on to committee hearings. Stakeholders and other third parties affected by proposed legislation could be used as experts, along with other experts who have specific knowledge on the matter at hand and the impacts on new legislation.

Expert called on to committee hearings by the committee members could also include representatives of ministries other than the ministry responsible for the issue, who would act as other, possible competing agents to the ministry handling the matter. Representatives of science, research and learning institutions would provide the committees with a more objective view on the matters at hand, and could be of assistance regarding the complexity of the issues.

The time constraints committees face could also lead to a fewer number of experts consulted by the committees, as even though committee members might be willing to consult more experts due to the increased complexity of the issues, they could simply not have time to do so, as the position of parliament is deemed to only be effective when decided as early as possible.

Previous research has however not produced results, which would indicate that committees are unable to consult as many experts as they would wish due to time constraints. It is possible that this might have been the case during the handling of some matters, but nothing would indicate that time constraints would systematically limit the number of experts committees are able to call on to committee hearings.

The four committees relevant to the study held on average 3.6 meetings per week during the parliamentary season of 2013, when the all the meetings of the 9 different sub-committees of the Finance Committee (where the vast majority of the expert consultations of the Committee take place) are included<sup>9</sup>. Even when the time

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<sup>9</sup> The parliamentary season of 2013 lasted from 5 February to 20 December 2013. During this time the Finance Committee held 54 meetings (1.2 per week), and its sub-committees held 268 meetings (5.9 per week). The Administration Committee held 102 meetings (2.3 per week), The Agriculture and Forestry Committee held 108 meetings (2.4 per week), and the Commerce Committee held 117 meetings (2.6 per week) (Eduskunta (2013)). The calculations of average number of meetings per week do not take into account the various holidays of the Parliament, meaning that the actual number of meetings per week are higher.

constraints resulting from the timetable of the handling of EU matters and time constraints resulting from the workload of the committees provide a challenge to the committees, the number of committee meetings held by the committees would indicate that the committees could consult the experts they wish. The gradual increase of expert consultations would also indicate that expert consultations are valued, and that other engagements of the committees can be reduced, if needed. Nonetheless, the possible time constraints do in any case have to be taken into consideration.

### **3.4.2 Incentives for Scrutiny**

It was previously discussed in chapter 2.1 that MPs and members of committee could have a disincentive to actively monitor the government parties. I hold the question of the incentive of MPs as committee members to actively control the government to be important regarding the entire foundation of this thesis. If previous research would have proven that the members of the Parliament, especially in the case of Finland, have no incentive to actively monitor the Government, the entire exercise of studying the principal-agent relationship between the Parliament and the Government could even be regarded as futile.

Having explained the motivation for the following passage, I now turn to the incentives of MPs for scrutiny. Strøm (2003, 72-73) states a possible lack of an incentive to be a result of three reasons. First, the parliament lacks suitable sanctions for the government, as the use of the no confidence vote as a sanction is blunt and unwieldy. Second, parliaments also usually lack the monitoring capability to even properly determine when sanctions would be appropriate choice of the method. Although used frequently in Finland, only two cabinets have been removed from office by a vote of no confidence since the Second World War (Raunio & Wiberg 2003, 312).

The most important cause for an incentive of scrutiny for the MPs identified by Strøm lies in the political parties. The justification is that MPs of the parties in Government have little incentive to scrutinise the behaviour of their fellow party members acting as ministers.

The Government in Finland, as most parliamentary democracies, is composed of parties that hold a majority in the Parliament, meaning that for the majority of MPs in Eduskunta, it would not be beneficial to impose a strict scrutiny over ministers of the

Government, unless the MPs believed that the behaviour of the ministers would later lead to an electoral loss in future elections.

Finland has had a majority government in place continuously since 1977 (Valtioneuvosto 2015). During a majority government the MPs of government parties will also comprise a majority in all committees in the Finnish Parliament, not just the plenary. Therefore, also during 2013, the members of the government parties have comprised a majority in all of the committees studied as research subjects in this thesis. As political parties wield a significant amount of influence in the Parliament, and as political parties are committed to extremely detailed Government Programme (Mattila 2014, 130), MPs of government parties could have a disincentive to effectively make use of their competences of accountability towards the government.

The parliamentary parties of Finland have even laid down unofficial rules of procedure for MPs of the parties in Government in Finland. The aim is to ensure the compliance of MPs of the governing parties to the official position of the Government, by, for example, limiting the powers of the MPs regarding making changes to Government bills and introducing own bills to the parliament. The current rules have existed almost unaltered since the 1980s and include clauses on compelling MPs to act in uniform and prohibiting them from making changes or incorporating resolutions to legislative proposals during committee handling without a unanimous decision by all parties in Government. (Wiberg 2011.)

Several authors have criticised this view of a low incentive for parliamentary scrutiny. Martin and Vanberg (2004) criticise the way parliaments are deemed to only have a marginal role in the policy-making process and how they are perceived to be dominated by the cabinet. Even when parliamentary scrutiny is researched, it is “largely concentrated on highlighting the impact that these features [of parliamentary scrutiny] have on *opposition* influence”<sup>10</sup> (ibid, 17). Martin and Vanberg exhibit how parties in government can use parliaments and committees as control mechanisms also within coalitions to ensure that other parties and their ministers do not deviate from mutually approved government decisions. In this way, parliamentary scrutiny can play a central role in allowing coalition members to counteract the principal-agent problem posed by

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<sup>10</sup> Emphasis original.

ministerial autonomy. The writers note this approach to parliaments to be fruitful especially when researching consensus democracies where parliaments have strong committees (cf. Lijphart 2012), such as Finland.

Saalfeld (2000) agrees that the nature and incentives for oversight activities depend on whether MPs belong to a government or an opposition party, but maintains that all re-election-seeking MPs have incentives to hold the governments accountable. Party leaders wishing to gain a broad national support may conflict with the policy preferences and constituency interests of specific MPs. Unsuccessful cabinets also harm the re-election possibilities of backbenchers. Through, what Saalfeld calls intra-party mode of monitoring (as opposed to opposition mode), government backbenchers have incentives to monitor the behaviour of “their” ministers even though the backbenchers and ministers may share the same goals and objectives. Empirical studies have shown that the support of backbenchers to the government “is conditional and cannot be taken for granted by government ministers” (ibid, 364).

It must also be noted that although being in the government can reduce the incentive for scrutiny for government MPs, the influence of parties in discouraging the monitoring of the government is not as significant in coalition governments than in single-party governments that control the majority of the parliament. Diverging policy preferences between government parties, opportunism, for example in the form of a desire for electoral advantages over other parties, including the other governing parties, and uncertainty over the governing partners increases the risks of delegation to the MP, and instigates further control of the executive (Strøm et al. 2010, 519-520).

Even if we accept the premise that MPs of the government parties have a lower incentive to scrutinise the Government, previous studies on the handling of European affairs in Finland (see Jääskeläinen 2000, 121; Lampinen & Räsänen 1998, 129, Raunio 2014, 230) indicate there to be a difference between the influence of party politics in domestic issues and European issues. It has been shown that government-opposition duality has a lesser impact on the practise of scrutiny on EU affairs than in policy areas related strictly to domestic politics. On the contrary, there are instances of MPs finding a broad consensus reaching beyond the government-opposition division, and even contradicting the Government’s position. Similarly, MPs from government parties are also given more freedom to manoeuvre while handling European issues as they allowed

to question and criticise ministers during committee hearings of European issues more openly, indicating that the unofficial rules of procedure for MPs of the government parties are less constricting during the handling EU affairs.

The Government and the Parliament have rarely had significant disagreements over the position of Finland in EU affairs, partly due to majority governments, but also because ministers have been reluctant to challenge the will of the special committees if they, for example, have demanded a more definite position on a single issue (Raunio 2007, 235). As such, MPs seem not to be as clearly divided between the government-opposition-division over European issues as over national legislation, which can possibly lead to greater flexibility in the opinions and actions of MPs in European issues.

It appears however, that the beginning of the Euro crisis and the results parliamentary elections of 2011 might have brought with them changes to the blurring of the government-opposition division that has existed before. The discussion on EU affairs has seemed to start to adhere more to the government-opposition-division as is the case with domestic legislation while voting during committee meetings has become more common, when previously the position of the Parliament was often reached unanimously (Raunio 2014, 230). This possible change could have an effect on the expert consultations of the special committees of Parliament as well.

In this chapter I have introduced the theoretical framework for the study and located the special committees of the Parliament of Finland in that framework. In the beginning of the chapter I defined the key concepts of the study: delegation, principal, agent and accountability. I then explained the chain of delegation in parliamentary democracies and located the chains where my interest in this thesis extends.

Committees can make use of two kinds of mechanism of control over the executive, of which *ex post* mechanisms are better suited to the work of the committees of the Finnish Parliament. During *ex post* control, committee can either be directly involved by monitoring their agents themselves, in what has been dubbed a police-patrol oversight. The other method, fire-alarm oversight, is seen as a more cost-effective way of monitoring the executive, and especially in situations such as European affairs, where direct monitoring is more difficult, utilizing this method could be advisable.



Having located the committees in the principal-agent theory and after explaining the incentives for scrutiny for committee members, I now turn to research setting of this thesis.

## **4. Research Setting, Data and Methods**

In this chapter I will further expand on the setting of the research including the research questions and hypotheses of the thesis, as well as introduce the data used in this thesis, how it was gathered and the methods used in analysing the data.

This thesis portrays a case study in that the research subjects are independent and clearly defined, meaning that the results of the study cannot be carelessly generalised to account for all special committees of the parliament, and in that the data on which the analysis is based on represents only one year, meaning that the results of the study cannot be carelessly generalised to account for all of the years of Finland's membership to the EU, even within the committees studied in this thesis.

However, some conclusions on the experts consultations of all of the committees of the Parliament can be made from the results of the analysis, based on the idea of an extensive case study, where common characteristics and patterns are discovered through analysis (see Eriksson & Koistinen 2014, 20-21). Previous studies of expert consultations have also shown that changes in the expert consultations of the committees happen incrementally and gradually.

The four committees of the study provide meaningful research subjects in that they i) have been shown to be the most active committees in the Parliament regarding European legislation, and in that the ii) policy fields they are responsible for and iii) their hierarchical levels within the committee system constitute an extensive overall picture especially in the study of the handling of European matters in special committees.

### **4.1 Research Setting**

The research questions of the thesis were introduced in chapter 1, and as the theoretical framework of the thesis and previous research on the committee of Eduskunta were explained in the previous chapters, I will now further clarify the research questions and hypotheses of the thesis on the basis of the theory and previous research. I will examine each research question in turn, beginning with the first one.

The first research question of the thesis, as described shortly in chapter 1, is whether *there is a difference in the number of experts called on by the committees during the handling of non-EU related issues and the experts called on by the committees during the handling of EU-related issues?* There are two contrasting hypotheses that can be drawn from previous studies.

According to the principal-agent theory, committees of the Eduskunta could wield more influence on the Government when handling EU-related matters as the Parliament has an *ex ante* possibility to enforce its view on the position of Finland prior to Council decision-making. In the handling of national legislation the parliament, through delegation, has limited its role to the handling of Government bills and participates primarily only after a legislative proposal has already been made, and cannot limit the workings of a minister *ex ante* in a similar way as in European matters.

According to the principal-agent theory third parties are often used in consultation when a principal has difficulties in directly monitoring the agent. As most European matters are decided by the COREPER in Brussels (Peterson & Bomberg 1999, 36), it can be more difficult for MPs to control or gain first-hand information of the workings of the ministers and the civil servants when it comes to European-level decision-making as opposed to national decision-making. The need for third party oversight and the increased role of the parliament, and as EU-matters are handled only in committees, the increased role of the committees could be visible through an increased interest in expert consultations on the part on committee members, leading to hypothesis 1A: *committees consult more experts on EU-related matters than on national matters.*

However, interviews with MPs and civil servants of committee secretariats done in previous studies would indicate that MPs are not concerned with European matters nearly as much as they are on national legislation (Raunio 2007, 247). Interviews have indicated that the list of experts to be consulted by committees are primarily drawn by the civil servants of the Parliament, with the MPs having little interest in requesting additional experts in order to gain more information. If European issues truly are less salient to MPs than national matters, the number of experts consulted should be lower in EU-related matters, leading to hypothesis 1B: *committees consult fewer experts on EU-related matters than on national matters.*

The second research question is concerned with the question of whom the committees consult: *is there a difference between the backgrounds or the institutions represented by the experts consulted in the committees during the handling of non-EU related issues and EU-related issues?*

As described above, the committees can freely choose whom they wish call on to their meetings. The Parliament does encourage the committees to first call on representatives of the ministry in charge of the issue and any others actors involved in the preparation of a legislative proposal or other matter.

As previously described, MPs have been critical of the information they have received regarding the preparatory stages of EU legislation and of the complexity and the lack of clarity in the information provided. As the committee members try to seek more, and possibly better information, it is likely they would turn to “independent experts”, whom committee members view as neutral experts who provide the committees with objective information, and whose consultations have also been proven to have a significant influence on the positions of the committees. The independent experts include researchers, scholars and representatives of learning institutions and research facilities. (Keinänen 2011.)

The above consideration leads to hypothesis 2: *during the handling of matters with an EU-connection, the committees consult more independent experts than in the handling of matters without an EU-connection.*

The third research question, *is there a difference in the method of oversight between EU-related issues and issues that are not related to the EU as depicted by the backgrounds or the institutions represented by the experts consulted by the committees,* is linked to the second research question. After examining the backgrounds of the experts consulted by the committees we can turn our attention to the different methods of *ex post* oversight performed by parliamentary committees.

Committees and committee members can gain first-hand information by actively monitoring the executive themselves, or they can delegate the monitoring of an agent to other actors, such as other, competing agents as well as interested or affected third parties. As described in chapter 2, the latter version of overseeing, labelled as fire-alarm oversight, is seen as a more cost-effective method than the prior, a police-patrol

oversight. As direct monitoring of the executive is seen to be more difficult in the handling EU matters than in the handling of national matters, there is an added incentive for the committees to rely on fire-alarm oversight. Hypothesis 3 is therefore: *the experts consulted by the committees during the handling of EU-related matters advocate a fire-alarm oversight more clearly than the experts consulted during the handling of matters not related to the EU.*

If the expert consultations performed by the committees include many actors who might be considered as representatives of third parties, it would appear that the committees are in favour of a fire-alarm oversight. If on the other hand the committees are primarily interested in hearing experts from the ministry in charge of the matter, with the representatives having to explain their actions to their principals, it could implicate a preference towards a police-patrol oversight.

Having further explained the research questions, and the basis for them in the previous chapters as well as the hypotheses I will focus on in my analysis, I will now turn my attention to the data and the methods of analysis of the thesis.

## **4.2 Data**

The data used in this thesis consists of the expert consultations of the Finance, Committee, Commerce, and Agriculture and Forestry Committees of the Parliament of Finland from the year 2013, the second full year of the four-year parliamentary term 2011-2015. The second full year of the parliamentary term has been chosen as during the first year of a parliamentary term the work of the committees is only in its early stages, while during the last year of the parliamentary term committees usually handle more issues than on an average year (Holli & Saari 2009, 23). Previous studies on the expert consultations of the committees have also used data on the second full year of the parliamentary term (see Helander & Pekonen 2007; Holli & Saari 2009; Saari 2012) and following this pattern allows for comparisons with previous studies.

Data used in this thesis consists of all the expert consultations called on by the four committees in question when handling reports and statements, which have been added to a database utilising a statistical analysis software SPSS. No such data has been made available by the Parliament itself, and the database has been coded by hand from the information found in the reports and statements adopted by the committees. Information

provided in the reports and statements consists of the name, position and organisation represented of those called on to committee meetings. This information has then been used to categorise experts into groups according to the organisations they have represented.<sup>11</sup>

The database used in this thesis was gathered using the help of a template and coding list created by Anne Holli and Milja Saari for their research project ”*Sukupuoli ja moninaisuus politiikan vanhoissa ja uusissa instituutioissa*”, which is funded by the Academy of Finland<sup>12</sup>.

When called on by a committee to a committee hearing, experts and organisations can either come before the committee to give an oral statement, submit a written statement for the committee or inform the committee that they wish to make no remarks on the issue at hand. The committees can also choose not to consult any experts.

All the possibilities have been coded into the database, but for the purposes of this study, I will not differentiate between oral and written statements from those instances where an expert has issued they wish to make no remarks. An expert or an organisation will only state that it wishes to make no remarks when it has been asked to submit a statement by a committee. As my interest in this thesis relates to ways of information gathering by the committees, these instances are relevant as well, as they show an interest by the committee to gain information from that specific organisation or expert. Reports and statements adopted without any consultation (N=9, or 3.8 % of all reports and statements adopted) are included in the data.

The organisations of the experts were divided into the following categories: representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter; other ministries; other governmental organisations; municipal and regional organisations; business organisations; labour organisations; civic organisations; scientific or research organisations and learning institutions; corporations; and others. Ministries, other

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<sup>11</sup> Not all information coded into the database has been used in the analysis of this study, such as information on the gender of the experts consulted, as that information is not within the scope of this thesis. They have been included in the database for possible further use.

<sup>12</sup> I would like to thank Anne Holli for granting me access to the coding list and databases they had gathered, which was of invaluable help during the coding process.

governmental organisations and municipal and regional organisations together form the public sector, while business, labour and civic organisations represent the third sector.

The categorisation used in this thesis is a compilation of the previous studies on expert consultations. In the categorisation used by Helander & Pekonen (2007) researchers, professors and other members of the academia are either incorporated into the groups labelled as other governmental bodies, or private persons. For the purposes of this study, I have formed them into a separate category, as even though universities, for example, are a part of the public sector, the use of researchers as experts in a committee will likely to be based on a different need for information as when calling on a civil servant from a governmental agency to a committee hearing. The differentiation has also been used in categorisations by Holli & Saari (2009, 64) and Keinänen (2011, 141).

Previous studies do not differentiate between representatives of different ministries. In order to be able to properly answer the third research question I have further divided the representatives of ministries into two separate categories: representatives of the ministries in charge of the matter at hand, and other ministries. The Parliament provides information on the ministry responsible for each document submitted by the government. This information has been used in the coding procedure by coding all representatives of the ministry in charge of the issue into one category, and all representatives of other ministries into another category.

The database consists of all expert consultations (N=2669) the committees have heard during the handling of the 121 reports and 119 statements adopted by the committees in 2013. There are 16 committees in the Parliament, and all of them combined adopted 253 reports and 352 statements in 2013 (Eduskunta 2013, 6). The data of this study encompasses 47.8 % of the reports and 33.8 % of the statements adopted by all of the committees of the Parliament in 2013.

The reports adopted the committees consist mainly of Government bills (hallituksen esitys), but also of Government reports (valtioneuvoston selonteko) and other matters such as Government statements (valtioneuvoston tiedonanto), Reports submitted to Parliament (eduskunnalle annettava kertomus), Ministry reports (ministeriön selvitys), Citizen's initiatives (kansalaisaloite) and legislative motions by a Member of Parliament (kansanedustajan lakialoite). Reports and statements adopted by the committees are

almost without exception based on documents submitted to the Parliament by the Government.

I have divided the *reports* adopted by the committees into two groups on the basis of their content. Matters which have a clear and distinct European basis, e.g. a national implementation of a directive or a legislation introduced for the purposes of bringing Finnish law into conformity with European Union law on the basis of a ruling by the European Court of Justice, have been labelled as matters with an EU connection. Other matters, which lack a clear link with an EU regulation, and are of national or international (excluding the EU) foundation, such as bilateral agreements, are labelled as matters without an EU connection.

The *statements* adopted by the committees consist of Government bills, legislative initiatives, Government reports, U-communications, E-communications and other matters, on which a committee issues a statement for the use of another committee in its handling of a report. U- and E-communications are submitted to the Grand Committee, who rarely adopts reports, while other statements are typically submitted to other special committees. The majority of the statements adopted by the committees consist of either U- or E-communications. I have divided the statements into four groups. Two groups are composed using the criteria described above, and they are also labelled matters with and without an EU connection. U-communications and E-communications form separate groups. Matters with an EU-connection, and U- and E-communication then include all EU-related statements.

The division between matters with an EU-connection and matters without an EU connection is based on a categorisation of Government bills by Pakarinen et al. (2010, 13-15) with some modifications. The authors categorise matters with an EU connection into 8 categories, which altogether account to 43 % of all Government bills submitted to the Parliament by the Government in 2009. A bill has however been categorised as having an EU connection “from even the slightest reference”. Therefore all matters categorised by Pakarinen et al. as having an EU connection, will not listed as such in this study. Of the categories used by Pakarinen et al, I have included matters that have a direct connection to 1) execution of a regulation; 2) implementation of a directive; 3)



implementation of a directive alongside national regulation; 4) decisions of the Court of Justice of the European Union; and 5) international agreements made by the EU<sup>13</sup>.

The study by Pakarinen et al was limited only to Government bills, and the categories described above are then composed only of Government bills. As my data includes also other types of documents handled by the committees, also other matters that have a direct EU connection, e.g. the Government report on EU policy, are included in the categorisation “matters with an EU connection”.

Of all the reports and statements adopted by the committees in 2013, 117 were matters without a significant EU-connection. Matters with an EU-connection amounted to 123. The amount of reports and statements adopted by the committees per each type of matter is displayed in table 1. The complete listing by each committee can be found in Annex I.

Table 1. Number of reports and statements adopted by the Finance, Administration, Agriculture and Forestry, and Commerce committees in 2013 per each type of matter

	Matters w/o EU-connection	Matters w/ EU-connection	U-Communication	E-communication	Total
Reports	92	29	N/A	N/A	121
Statements	25	6	65	23	119

Having explained the gathering of the data used in the study and the ways the data has been categorised during the coding process, I will now explain the methods used in the analysis as well as the process of analysis next.

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<sup>13</sup> The categories not included in the category “matters with an EU-connection” include matters with references to: 1) Commission decisions, as they are mainly references on restrictions the Commission has issued for national legislation, such as state subsidies for businesses; 2) Council framework decision, which have been removed from use by the Lisbon treaty; and 3) various soft law provisions, such as resolutions, guidelines and green and white papers, as an EU connection in these types of references is used primarily as an additional basis and is very rarely the instigator of a new regulation at the national level (Pakarinen et al. 2010, 13-15).

### 4.3 Methods

The data has been analysed through simple statistical methods. The choice of methods used in this thesis is based on the methods used in previous quantitative analyses of expert consultations (see Holli & Saari 2009, 23; Saari 2012, 100).

The amount of experts called on to committee hearings have been added up per each committee. The frequencies of expert consultations have also been summed up per the 4 categories of reports and statements described above. The calculations have been used to examine the amount of expert consultations per each type of report and statement, both with all the four committees combined and by each committee. The results are used to answer the first research question.

The frequencies of the experts consulted have also been added up based on the categorisations of the backgrounds and organisations represented by the experts. The frequencies of the experts per each category examined through the four categories of statements and reports. The results are analysed with all of the committees combined and by each committee. The analysis of the backgrounds of the experts consulted by the committees is used to answer the second research question.

The results of the categorisation of the experts are the starting point in examining the third research question. In this part of the analysis the separation of representatives of ministries into two categories is especially important as representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter act as representatives of the agent while representatives of other ministries can be regarded as competing agents of the Parliament. In the third part of the analysis I will examine the percentage the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter compose and compare it to the use of other experts: third parties, competing agents and independent experts.

The results of the analysis are presented primarily through cross-tabulations. Due to the size of the cross-tabulations and restrictions of space, I will present only certain of the cross-tabulations in the text. The complete tables can be found in Annexes II and III.

All of the reports and statements adopted by the four committees during the year 2013 are included in the data and the gathered data is therefore not a sample of the four committees as such. The study is nonetheless, like other studies on expert consultations

of the Eduskunta, only a cross-sectional study, encompassing only the year 2013. Although previous cross-sectional studies have shown there to be a continuity in the expert consultations of the committees, with changes happening gradually, over longer periods of time, there is a need to be cautious in making too far-reaching conclusions concerning other years than 2013.

The results of the study cannot be claimed to represent all the special committees of the Eduskunta or all the 20 years of Finland's membership to the EU. That is also not the purpose of this thesis. For these reasons, and also due to practical concerns, I have not performed statistical tests on the data<sup>14</sup>.

This chapter further clarified the research setting and introduced the data and methods used in the study. In addition to grounding the research questions into the theoretical framework and previous research, I also introduced the hypotheses that form the basis of the analysis. The gathering and coding of the data was explained, as well as the methods used to analyse the data and ultimately answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. After clarifying the above, I can now turn to the analysis of the study.

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<sup>14</sup> The most appropriate statistical test for the data would be Pearson's  $X^2$  test, but as the test functions best when the frequency in all categories of the data is greater than 5 (Nummenmaa 2010, 308), which is not the case in the data of this study, the usefulness of the test would be questionable in any case.

## 5. Analysis

This chapter will present the analysis of the data gathered. I will examine each research question in its own sub-chapter, starting with the amount of experts consulted by the committees. In the second sub-chapter I will focus on backgrounds of the experts heard by the committees. Chapter 5.3 will focus on the methods of overseeing and the differences between oversight during the handling of EU-connected matters and matters without an EU-connection.

### 5.1 Expert Consultations of the Committees

I will first start the analysis with an overview of the amount of expert consultations of the four committees, and reflect the findings to previous researches. I will then continue to examine the possible differences in the number of experts heard by the committees during the handling of matters related to the EU and matters not related to the EU. I will present complete tables of the number of experts consulted by the committees only with all of the committees combined. Tables of the number of experts consulted by each committee are presented in Annex II.

Table 2 presents the average number of experts called on by the committees per reports and statements. The table presents all reports and statements adopted by the committees, and reports are not differentiated between those matters that have an EU-connection and those without such a connection.

Table 2. Average number of experts consulted by the Finance, Administration, Commerce, and Agriculture and Forestry committees in 2013 per reports or statements

	Finance	Administration	Commerce	Agriculture & Forestry	All Committees
Reports	10.9	19.7	11.5	14.5	13.5
Statements	6.3	10.1	8.5	8.5	8.7
Both	9.6	14.6	9.9	10.7	11.1

The Administration Committee consulted the most experts of the four committees during the handling of both reports and statements, followed by the Agriculture and Forestry and Commerce Committees. The Finance Committee consulted the least experts of the committees. All of the committees consulted more experts during the

handling of reports than during the handling of statements, as has been the case with the expert consultations in previous years as well, shown by previous research.

The number of experts consulted has increased from the years 2001 and 2005. Compared to 2001, the average number of experts consulted per report has more than doubled in the Finance and Agriculture and Forestry Committees, while the increase in the other two committees has been over 50 %. In the handling of statements, the average number of experts consulted has increased in three committees, while there has been a decrease in the Finance Committee. The largest increase has happened in the Administration Committee (90.6 %).

The previous research on the year 2005 did not separate between reports and statements. Compared to 2005, the average number of expert consultations increased in the Finance, Administration and Commerce Committees. There was no real change in the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, as the average number of experts consulted was 0,1 lower in 2013 than in 2005. The largest increase is visible in the Administration Committee (92.0 % increase), followed by the Commerce Committee (52.3 % increase) and the Finance Committee (37.1 % increase).

It would then appear that while the number of experts consulted by the Agriculture and Forestry Committee increased between the years 2001 and 2005, there has been no increase since that time. The opposite seems to be the case with the Administration Committee, where the majority of the increase seems to have happened during 2005 and 2013. As all the studies are cross-sectional studies of specific years, there is a need to be cautious in making generalisations. It would appear however, that the increase in the number of expert consulted by the committees has been maintained as a general trend, at least in the case of the four committee studied.

Next I will analyse the amounts of experts consulted by the committees according to the categories of the nature of the matter at hand, as explained in the previous chapter (matters without an EU connection, matters with an EU connection, U-communications and E-communications). The average number of experts consulted by all of the committees per each type of matter, divided into the reports and statements, is exhibited in table 3.

Table 3. Average number of experts consulted by the Finance, Administration, Commerce, and Agriculture and Forestry committees in 2013 per each type of statement or report

	Matter w/o EU-connection	Matter w/ EU-connection	U-communication	E-communication
Reports	13.7	12.8	N/A	N/A
Statements	15.8	17.8	6.4	5.4

During the handling of reports, the committees have on average heard fewer experts during the handling of matters with an EU-connection than during the handling of matters without an EU-connection. The difference is however only 0.9 expert consultation per each report. As the data only includes one year, it would be unwise to make overreaching assumptions on the difference.

As opposed to the handling of reports, during the handling of statements the committees consulted on average more experts during the handling of matters with an EU-connection than during the handling of matters without such a connection, when excluding U- and E-communications. Although the difference is slightly higher than the opposite difference during the handling of reports, one cannot make clear conclusions from the data on this case either.

The clearest difference between the number of experts consulted by the committees can be found in the handling of U- and E-communications. The committees have consulted a significantly lower number of experts during the handling of U- and E-communications, when compared to the other two categories of statements or to the handling of reports. The committees have called on, on average, only 6.4 and 5.4 experts per each U- and E-communication they have adopted a statement on. The number of experts consulted during the handling of other matters, such as Government bills or Government reports is 15.8 and 17.8, per matters without and with an EU-connection, respectively.

When the categories are combined so that U- and E-communications, and the other two categories form new categories, we can see the difference more clearly. The difference is exhibited in table 4.

Table 4. Average number of experts consulted by the Finance, Administration, Commerce, and Agriculture and Forestry committees in 2013 per each statement

Matters w/o EU-connection & Matters w/ EU-connection	U-communications & E-communications
16.2	6.1

The average amount of experts consulted by the four committees during the handling of U- and E-communications in 2013 was 6.1, while the committees consulted on average 16.2 experts per statement during the handling of other matters. The data shows that the committees consulted more than 2.5 times as many experts during the handling of Government bills, Government reports, and other matters, when all such statements are combined, than during the handling of U- or E-communications.

All committees consulted less experts during the handling of U- and E-communications than during the handling of other matters, but the differences are the greatest in the Administration Committee. In that committee the number of experts consulted during the handling of statements in the categories “without an EU-connection” and “with an EU-connection” was 21.0 and 22.0, respectively. During the handling of U- and E-communications, the number of experts consulted was 4.9 and 2.8, respectively – more than four times less.

The significantly lower number of consultations during the handling of U- and E-communications indicates that committee members are not as interested in calling on experts to committee meetings during the handling of EU affairs as they appear to be during the handling of domestic issues. I argue this to be the case even though the number of experts consulted during the handling of Government bills, and other matters submitted to the Parliament by the Government, is roughly consistent irrespective of whether the matters has an EU-connection or not.

The answer to the first research question is two-fold. There isn’t a clear difference in the number of experts called on by the committees during the handling of non-EU related issues and EU-related issues, as there isn’t a significant difference in the number of experts consulted by the committees between the first two categories.

The committees did however hear far less experts during the handling of U- and E-communications than during the handling of other matters. In the handling of European affairs, U- and E-communications are specifically intended to aid the involvement of the Eduskunta in legislation at the European level. These communications were specifically devised to compensate for the losses of power the Eduskunta was seen to face with the accession of Finland to the EU.

Both the Eduskunta itself and the Government have repeatedly expressed the need to be involved in the early stages of European decision-making in order to maximise their potential influence. In the handling of EU affairs in the Eduskunta, early involvement corresponds to the handling of U- and E-communications. Government bills with an EU-connection reach the Parliament and the committees only after decisions have already been made at the EU-level, and are usually implementation of directives, whereas regulations adopted in the EU are only handled in the Eduskunta during the handling of E- and U-communications.

For this reason, of the two contrasting hypotheses proposed earlier, hypothesis 1B, *committees consult fewer experts on EU-related matters than on national matters*, received more support from the data than hypothesis 1A.

Hypothesis 1A, *committees consult more experts on EU-related matters than on national matters*, was based on the assumptions that committees could give binding instructions to their agents, ministers and civil servants, before decisions were made at the European level, and that direct control of the agents would be more difficult when monitoring their actions over EU affairs. For the data to support this assumption, the committees would have to be active especially during the handling of U- and E-communications, as only during the handling of those matters can the committees have an influence on the position of Finland in the Council.

The data also provides an interesting insight that is separate from the first research question but I will raise the issue here because it has not been presented in previous studies. The results of the previous quantitative studies on the expert consultations of the committees have shown that committees consult more experts during the handling of reports than during the handling of statements. This is the case with the four committees studied in this thesis as well, as shown in table 3.



But, when we distinguish between the different types of statements committees adopt, as I have done in this thesis, we can see that although the amount of experts consulted during the handling on U- and E-communications is low, this is not true regarding other statements adopted by the committees. As U- and E-communications compose such a large share of the statements adopted by the committees, they heavily reduce the average amount of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of statements. In fact, when excluding U- and E-communications, the committees have actually consulted more experts during the handling of statements than during the handling of reports. The Finance Committee was the only committee, which consulted more experts during the handling of reports than statements, even when U- and E-communications are excluded.

I will further analyse the finding in chapter 6.3 and now turn my attention to the second research question.

## **5.2 Backgrounds of the Experts Consulted**

In this chapter I will analyse the backgrounds of the experts heard by the committees and the possible differences between the backgrounds of experts consulted during the handling of EU-related matters and matters not related to the EU.

For the sake of readability, I will not present the complete tables on the experts consulted by each committee. As was the case in the previous chapter as well, I will only present a complete overview with the consultations of all the four committees combined in the text. I will also presents specific findings of individual committees in the text when there is added value in a visual presentation. The complete tables of expert consultations by each committee can be found in Annex III.

I will first give an overview of the backgrounds of the experts consulted by all of the committees by examining the data including all reports and reports, without categorisations. I will examine data on all of the committees as well data on each of the committees. I will then compare the backgrounds of the experts consulted by the committees during the handling of the different types of matters. I will analyse these differences first by looking at the data comprised of all committee and also by focusing on each committee and comparing the four committees against each other.

### 5.2.1 Overview of the Committees

Table 5 shows the share and amount of experts consulted by the committees, divided into categories, when taking into account all reports and statements adopted by the committees. When reviewing all of the four committees, we can distinguish four groups that have been consulted the most: representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other ministries, representatives of other governmental institutions, and representatives of business organisations. In total, these four groups amount to more than two thirds of all experts heard by the committees in 2013.

When looking at the data on all four committees, the committees relied heavily on the consultations of the representatives of the public sector. Representatives of all ministries amount to 29.1 % of all experts consulted, while all the representatives of the public sector account to 55.2 % of all expert consultations.

There are noticeable differences in the backgrounds of the experts consulted between the committees. The Administration Committee relied the most on the consultations provided by the public sector, with 73.6 % of all consultations coming from representatives of the public sector. In the other committees, the share of the public sector and other groups was more even. The share of the public sector was 51.8 % in the Finance Committee, 49.1 % in the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, while being lowest in the Commerce Committee, 43,3 %.

While the share of the consultations of business organisations is similar across three of the four committees, in the Administration Committee their share is less than five percentages. The Administration Committee is also the only committee, which relied more on the consultations of labour organisations than business organisations.

As had been the case in previous studies on expert consultations as well, representatives of business organisations were heard frequently in the Agriculture and Forestry and the Commerce Committees. When accounting all reports and statements, in both of the committees representatives of business organisations amounted to roughly a fourth of all experts consulted. Different from previous studies was that in the Finance Committee the share of the consultations of the representatives of business organisations was as high as in the two committees noted above, although the

Table 5. Experts consulted by the committees during the handling of all reports and statements in 2013, divided into categories

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Municipal, regional	Labour organisations	Business organisations	Civic organisations	Corporations	Science, research	Others	Total (N)
Finance	16.0 %	16.0 %	15.0 %	4.8 %	7.3 %	23.0 %	8.0 %	3.6 %	6.3 %	0.0 %	100.0 % (413)
Administration	10.9 %	21.5 %	28.8 %	12.4 %	10.4 %	4.4 %	3.2 %	1.7 %	5.9 %	0.7 %	100.0 % (815)
Agriculture & Forestry	14.2 %	14.7 %	16.6 %	3.6 %	1.7 %	24.8 %	11.4 %	3.6 %	8.8 %	0.5 %	100.0 % (633)
Commerce	12.9 %	11.8 %	15.8 %	2.8 %	4.8 %	26.2 %	6.1 %	12.4 %	5.8 %	1.4 %	100.0 % (808)
All four Committees	13.1 %	16.1 %	19.9 %	6.3 %	6.2 %	18.7 %	6.7 %	5.7 %	6.6 %	0.7 %	100.0% (2669)

policy fields the Finance Committee is responsible for are mostly related to public law and state budget.

Noteworthy is also the difference in the share of representatives of corporations used as experts between the committees, as the Commerce Committee relies on their consultations significantly more than the other committees.

Having examined the overview of the background of the experts, when all reports and statements are included, I will now explore the backgrounds of experts consulted based on the division of reports and statements into the categories outlined above: reports without an EU-connection; reports with an EU-connection; statements without an EU-connection; statements with an EU-connection; U-communications; and E-communications. Table 6 shows the share of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of reports and statements per each type of matter.

When looking at the data of all the committees, the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter is significantly higher during the handling of U- and E-communications than in other matters. The difference is particularly clear when backgrounds of the experts consulted during the handling of U- and E-communications are compared to the experts consulted during the handling of other statements. The trend is consistent across all of the four committees.

Conversely, the share of the representatives of other ministries consulted by the committees is higher during the handling of statements in the categories “without an EU-connection” and “with an EU-connection” than in all other types of matter. This is to be expected as committees issuing a statement on, for example, a Government bill, are intended to view the bill through the standpoint of their own policy field. During the handling of the bill, they will typically consult their counterpart-ministry, which is usually not the ministry in charge of the matter.

In the other categories, reports and U- and E-communications, the ministry on charge of the matter is typically the counterpart-ministry of the committee issuing a report or a statement - the Ministry of Finance in the case of the Finance Committee. It can therefore be more meaningful in this instance to compare U- and E-communications with the handling of reports. But, as we can see from the table, even this comparison

Table 6. Experts consulted by the Finance, Administration, Commerce and Agriculture and Forestry Committees during the handling of reports and statements in 2013, divided into each type of matter.

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Municipal, regional	Labour organisations	Business organisations	Civic organisations	Corporations	Science, research	Others	Total (N)
Reports w/o EU-connection	11.4 %	14.0 %	20.4 %	7.1 %	8.1 %	18.2 %	7.5 %	5.9 %	6.7 %	0.6 %	100.0 % (1261)
Reports w/ EU-connection	12.4 %	14.6 %	23.2 %	7.6 %	5.4 %	15.1 %	9.7 %	6.5 %	5.4 %	0.0 %	100.0 % (370)
Statements w/o EU-connection	8.9 %	22.3 %	21.6 %	5.8 %	7.4 %	14.5 %	5.3 %	6.9 %	6.6 %	0.8 %	100.0 % (394)
Statements w/ EU-connection	6.5 %	22.4 %	15.0 %	11.2 %	5.6 %	16.8 %	0.9 %	2.8 %	13.1 %	5.6 %	100.0 % (107)
U-communication	20.1 %	15.7 %	18.4 %	1.9 %	1.9 %	25.9 %	5.1 %	4.4 %	5.6 %	1.0 %	100.0 % (413)
E-communication	27.4 %	16.9 %	8.1 %	4.8 %	0.0 %	26.6 %	4.8 %	4.0 %	7.3 %	0.0 %	100.0 % (124)
All reports and statements	13.1 %	16.1 %	19.9 %	6.3 %	6.2 %	18.7 %	6.7 %	5.7 %	6.6 %	0.7 %	100.0 % (2669)

shows a significant difference in the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter.

The high share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter may be, at least to a certain extent, a result of the number of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of U- and E-communications. When compiling the list of experts to be consulted by a committee, the first expert to be called on to a committee hearing is typically the ministry civil servant who has been responsible for preparing the matter. As the committees have called on fewer experts during the handling of U- and E-communications it can be expected that the percentage of representatives of the ministry in charge increases.

Another difference separating U- and E-communications from the other types of matters is the share of representatives of business organisations. Business organisations have also been consulted more during the handling U- and E-communications than during the handling of any other matters. Meanwhile, the use of representatives of labour organisations as experts on the other hand has been more limited during the handling of U- and E-communications.

Apart from these considerations, there are no significant differences in the backgrounds of the experts consulted by the committees when reviewing the data on all of the four committees combined. What is striking is indeed the similarity of the backgrounds of the experts called on to committee hearings when comparing the two types of reports against each other. The largest difference in any category of experts is three percentage points.

The use of representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions as experts is also very similar across all types of matter, except in the category “statements with an EU-connection”, where their share is clearly higher than in the other categories. However, as there is no increase in the other three categories of matters, which represent matters than have an EU-relation, no strong conclusions can be made from this fact.

### **5.2.2 Differences between the Committees**

Before continuing on to examine the backgrounds of the experts by each committee, I need to raise one notion on the data. As exhibited previously, the number of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of U- and E-communications is low, with the committees consulting only 6.4 and 5.4 experts per statement, respectively. The low number of experts consulted provides for a challenge when analysing the data, as the frequencies of consultations per each category decreases. In certain situations I have combined categories to create larger groups, such as all experts of public sector or all EU-related statements. Having said this, I will now examine the experts consulted by each committee to point out any differences between matter related to the EU and other matters.

Of the four committees, the Finance Committee is the one committee that differs the most from the other three committees in terms of expert consultations between EU-related matters and other matters. The differences in the consultation of experts between the different matters in the other three committees reflect mostly the findings discussed above on the data of all of the committees.

When observing the handling of EU-related statements and reports (U- and E-communications and matters with an EU-connection) in the Finance Committee and compare them to the handling of matters without an EU-connection, we can see clear differences in the backgrounds of the experts consulted between the two groups of matters. The share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter and of the representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions is clearly higher during the handling of matters in the former category. Conversely, the share of the representatives of other ministries is significantly lower during matters with an EU-connection.

As table 7 exhibits, during the handling of statements with an EU-connection and U- and E-communications, representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter and representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions compose over 60 % of all experts consulted, far more than their share during the handling of matters not related to the EU.

Table 7. Representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other ministries, and representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions consulted by the Finance Committee, percentages (%).

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Science, research
Reports w/o EU-connection	13.5	13.8	5.0
Reports w/ EU-connection	30.4	4.3	13.0
Statements w/o EU-connection	9.1	68.2	0.0
Statements w/ EU-connection; U- & E-communications	39.2	10.7	21.4
All reports and statements	16.0	16.0	6.3

The increased use of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter during the handling of U- and E-communications occurring in all of the committees was noted above, as was the fact that the higher share was consistent across all committees. There is a similar trend occurring in three of the four committees during the handling of reports as well, with the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter being higher during the handling of reports with an EU-connection than reports without an EU-connection. Although the difference is greatest in the Finance Committee, similar trends can be observed in the Agriculture and Forestry and Commerce Committees as well, but not in the Administration Committee.

Such significant differences regarding the higher share of representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions as witnessed in the Finance Committee (table 7) are not visible in the other committees. The increase was only slight in the Administration Committee, and, in the Commerce Committee representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions were consulted less during the handling of EU-related reports and statements than during the handling of reports and statements not related to the EU. In the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, their difference was two-fold, as their share was slightly higher during the handling of EU-related matters when examining statements, but significantly lower when examining reports.



Table 8. Share of the representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions consulted by the Administration, Agriculture and Forestry, and the Commerce Committees, percentages (%).

	Administration	Agriculture & Forestry	Commerce
Reports w/o EU-connection	6.8	9.2	6.7
Reports w/ EU-connection	7.7	1.3	4.4
Statements w/o EU-connection	3.6	9.5	10.2
Statements w/ EU-connection; U- & E-communications	4.5	11.1	4.2
All reports and statements	5.9	8.8	5.8

The second research question referred to the possible differences in the backgrounds of the experts consulted during the handling of non-EU related matters and experts consulted during the handling of EU-related matters. The hypothesis presented was that the committees would consult more independent experts during the handling of matters with an EU-connection than during the handling of matters without an EU-connection, as they are seen by MPs as providers of neutral and objective information and to whose consultations have been shown to have a significant influence on the positions of the committees.

When looking at the data on all of the four committees combined, the hypothesis presented does not receive significant support. There is no meaningful difference in the use of representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions between EU-related matters and non-EU-related matters, apart from the matters categorised as statements with an EU-connection.

The only committee where the share of scientists and researches was significantly higher during the handling of EU-related matters was the Finance Committee, while in the Administration Committee their share was only slightly higher.

To summarise the findings related to the second research question, the most noticeable difference was between the handling of U- and E-communications and all other statements and reports, as was the case with the first research question as well. The Finance Committee differs from the other committees, as clear and consistent differences between the experts consulted during the handling of all EU-related matters and all matters not related to the EU can be found in the experts consulted by the committee.

The largest difference to be found in the data on all committees relates to the share of representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, as their share was significantly higher during the handling of U- and E-communications than during the handling of other matters. This can be partly a result of the lower number of experts heard by the committees during the handling of U- and E-communications.

Having examined the second research question, I will now focus on the third research question in the following sub-chapter.

### **5.3 Method of Oversight**

The third research question of this thesis is focused on the different ways of oversight committees can employ: direct, hands-on monitoring, or police-patrol oversight; and indirect, monitoring through other agents and third parties, or fire-alarm oversight. In this chapter I will examine whether there is a difference between the methods of oversight between EU-related matters and matters not related to the EU, as depicted by the backgrounds of the experts consulted by the committees. My hypothesis is that the consultation of experts during the handling of EU-related matters advocates a fire-alarm oversight more clearly than the experts consulted during the handling of matters not related to the EU.

The first prerequisite for the research of the methods of oversight is that the committees show that they in fact do control the executive and, among other means, try to seek information also from sources other than the executive. The constantly rising number of expert consultations gives the presumption that MPs are both interested in gaining information from outside sources and that they value the information received through committee hearings. The hearing of experts has also been labelled as one of the most

important aspects of work of the committees. This suggests that expert consultations have an impact on the monitoring of the executive that the committees perform.

### **5.3.1 The Dual Role of the Committees**

I will now turn to the finding first discussed in chapter 6.1. When U- and E-communications are excluded from the data, three of the four committees researched in the study have actually consulted more experts during the handling of statements than during the handling of reports.

Committees have a double role in the chain of delegation, as they function both as agents to the Parliament as a whole, and as principals to the executive and their counterpart ministries. In fire-alarm oversight a principal relies on multiple agents, who monitor each other and provide the principal with information on the other agents. In their role as agents, committees function as competing agents for the Parliament as a whole. Committees of the Eduskunta do not then only control their counterpart-ministries, but they can also monitor other committees through the viewpoint of their policy fields.

The most important method of influencing the work of other committees is the use of statements. The large number of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of statements, when U- and E-communications are excluded, is an indication that the committees take the task of adopting statements and gaining additional information for the use of the committee and for the entire Parliament sincerely.

### **5.3.2 Committee Hearings as Instruments of Fire-Alarm Oversight**

But, what do the backgrounds of the experts called on to committee hearings tell us of the method of oversight performed by the committees? As I have done previously, I will first present an overview of all of the committees, before examining the possible differences of oversight in the handling of EU-related matters and other matters.

In a principal-agent relationship between the Parliament and the ministries, the agent in any particular case consists of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter. Other governmental organisations, such as governmental agencies, can sometimes act as decision-makers in specific policies too, although this is much more seldom. This can

occur for example in situations where a representative of a government agency is heavily involved in the preparation of a legislative proposal, obscuring the division between the ministry and the agency.

In some cases the civil servant who presents a matter to a committee is not indeed a ministry official, but rather a representative of a governmental agency. On few occasions in the data gathered for this thesis it was specifically noted in the report or statement adopted by a committee that a civil servant of a governmental agency represented the ministry in charge of the matter. In these cases that specific expert was coded to be a representative of the ministry in charge of the matter.

Representatives of other ministries function as representatives of competing agents during committee hearings. Representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions function mainly as independent experts, although in certain issues, such as education policy, they act as affected third parties. Although representatives of science and research are not representatives of third parties as such, they are vital in their role as neutral information providers, providing the committees with an overall picture of the matter at hand (cf. Keinänen 2011).

All other experts consulted by committees (municipal and regional organisations, labour, business and civic organisations, corporations and others) function as third parties, whom the decisions of the agent affect, or whom have expert knowledge on a subject due to their role.

Table 6 (page 60) provides a comprehensive table on the use of experts by including data on all of the committees, divided according to the different types of reports and statements. A simplified presentation of the share of the consultations of the different actors can be found in Tables 9 and 10. The tables show the shares of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter; other governmental organisations; other ministries; scientific or research organisations and learning institutions; and experts categorised as representatives of third parties per each committee, as per the categorisation described above.

Although representatives of the other governmental agencies primarily represent an affected third party, due to their varying role and for reasons of transparency, I have

decided not to categorise them in the same group with other third parties. As a result, they form a separate category in the following tables.

Information in Table 9 is based on the data on consultations during the handling of all reports adopted by the committee and table 10 on the data on consultations during the handling of all statements adopted by the committee.

Table 9. Share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other governmental institutions, representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions and all other experts consulted by the committees during the handling of all reports in 2013, percentages (%).

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Science, research	Third parties
Finance	14.6	13.2	14.9	5.5	51.8
Administration	9.2	19.5	30.0	7.0	34.3
Agriculture & Forestry	12.6	12.3	17.9	7.2	50.0
Commerce	11.4	10.1	17.8	5.9	54.7
All committees	11.6	14.2	21.0	6.4	46.7

Table 10. Share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other governmental institutions, representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions and all other experts consulted by the committees during the handling of all statements in 2013, percentages (%).

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Science, research	Third parties
Finance	26.0	36.0	16.0	12.0	10.0
Administration	13.9	24.8	26.8	4.0	30.5
Agriculture & Forestry	15.9	17.1	15.2	10.5	41.3
Commerce	14.6	13.7	13.5	5.7	52.6
All committees	15.3	19.1	18.0	6.9	40.7

As we can see, the majority of the experts consulted by the committees can be regarded as representatives of either competing agents or third parties. This is concurrent during the handling of both reports and statements.

During the handling of reports, the average share of the experts that are representatives of the agent is between 9 and 15 percentage in every committee, if including only the ministry in charge. The relatively low percentage of the representatives of science and research<sup>15</sup> indicates that the committees place considerable value on the opinions of third parties.

During the handling of statements the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter consulted by the committees is higher than during the handling of reports. As witnessed before (chapter 6.2), the committees rely much more on the consultations of the ministry in charge of the matter during the handling of U- and E-communications than during the handling of other matters. As we can see in table 11 on the composition of experts during the handling of statements, when U- and E-communications are excluded, the rise in the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter can be seen to be a result of the handling of U- and E-communications.

The table below shows that all of the committees rely more on the expert consultations of competing agents during the handling of statements, when U- and E-communications are excluded, than during the handling of reports. This is especially the case with the Finance Committee, where representatives of competing agents form by themselves a majority of all experts heard, indicating that during the handling of statements, the committee relies much more on the input of competing agents, than on representatives of third parties. A similar trend can be seen in the other committees as well, but not to such an extent.

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<sup>15</sup> The committee that consults scientist and researchers the most in the Finnish Parliament is the Constitutional Law Committee, where their share was 57.3 % in 2003 (Wiberg 2003, 983) and 62.8 % in 2005 (Holli & Saari 2009, 66). The second highest share in 2005 was in the Legal Affairs Committee (23.1%) (ibid).

Table 11. Share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other governmental institutions, representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions and all other experts consulted by the committees during the handling of statements excluding U- and E-communications in 2013, percentages (%).

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Science, research	Third parties
Finance	12.5	53.1	15.6	9.4	9.4
Administration	9.0	25.0	28.3	4.7	33.0
Agriculture & Forestry	7.6	16.8	19.1	10.7	45.8
Commerce	7.1	15.9	8.7	10.3	57.9
All committees	8.4	22.4	20.2	8.0	41.1

Having presented an overview on the method of overseeing in the committees, I will next examine the possible differences regarding the method of oversight between EU-related matters and matters that have no significant EU-relation.

### **5.3.3 Oversight in the Handling of EU-Related Matters and Other Matters**

Some indications of a possible difference in the method of oversight between U- and E-communications and other matters can be derived from the results presented earlier, especially related to the heavy use of experts from the ministry in charge of the matter. I will next examine the differences more clearly by first focusing on the possible differences between the handling of EU-related matters and the handling of matters not related to the EU and later specifically between the differences in the handling between U- and E-communications and other matters.

In table 12 the categorisation used above is applied to reports and statements adopted by all of the committees divided between EU-related matters and other matters. The table shows that the share of the representatives of the ministries in charge of the matter are consulted more often during the handling of EU-related matters, both during the handling of reports and statements.

The difference is much more visible in the handling of statements, where the difference is also consistent in all of the four committees. During the handling of reports the

difference is less striking, and applies only to the Finance, Agriculture and Forestry and Commerce Committees, while in the Administration Committee, representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter were used more frequently during the handling of matters without an EU-connection. Of all of the committees, the differences in the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter are most dominant in the Finance Committee.

Table 12. Share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other governmental institutions, representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions and all other experts consulted by the Finance, Administration, Agriculture and Forestry, and Commerce committees during the handling of reports and statements of EU-related matters and other matters in 2013, percentages (%).

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Science, research	Third parties
Reports w/o EU-connection	11.4	14.0	20.4	6.7	47.4
Reports w/ EU-connection	12.4	14.6	23.2	5.4	44.3
Statements not related to the EU	8.9	22.3	21.6	6.6	40.6
Statements related to the EU	19.3	17.1	15.8	7.1	40.7

Apart from the difference in the percentage of the representatives in charge of the matter, no clear conclusions on the difference of oversight can be drawn from the usage of expert consultations of the committee between matters related to the EU and matters not related to the EU. Especially during the handling of reports, the differences are minimal. In both cases, both in reports and statements, the share of the representatives of third parties compose a majority of experts consulted, when representatives of other governmental organisations are included. The only conclusion that can be drawn from the differences of oversight concerns the handling of statements, where the committees seem to be slightly more concerned with hearing from the agent themselves, rather than from competing agents and third parties.

I will now turn my attention to the differences of oversight as indicated by expert consultations between the handling of U- and E-communications and other matters. As exhibited above and in chapter 6.2, the share of the representatives of the ministry in



charge of the matter in the experts consulted by the committees was particularly high during the handling of U- and E-communications.

In order to examine U- and E-communications separately, I have formed table 13 shows the categorisation used above applied to the handling of U- and E-communications, and statements that have an EU-connection, but are not U- or E-communications in all of the committees. The table allows us to further examine the differences in the handling of statements shown in table 12, where all of the other types of matters have already been exhibited using the same categorisation.

Table 13. Share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, representatives of other governmental institutions, representatives of scientific or research organisations and learning institutions and all other experts consulted by the Finance, Administration, Agriculture and Forestry, and Commerce committees during the handling of U- and E-communications, percentages (%).

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Science, research	Third Parties
U- and E-communications	21.8	16.0	16.0	6.0	40.2
Statements w/ EU-connection	6.5	22.4	15.0	13.1	43.0

As we can see from the table, the handling of U- and E-communications causes the increase in the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter, exhibited in table 12. The increase of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter comes primarily at the expense of the representatives of other ministries.

Overall, even during the handling of U- and E-communications, the representatives of the third parties form a majority of all the experts consulted by the committees, when representatives of other governmental organisations are included in this category.

The Finance Committee again proves different from the other committees. The increase in the share of the representatives of the ministry in the handling of EU-related statements is not a result of the handling of U- and E-communications, as exhibited already in table 7. The table also shows the reliance of the committee on the consultations of scientists and researchers during its handling of EU-related statements and reports, a trend not visible in the other committees.

Having explained the differences between of the experts consulted by the committees between the handling of EU-related matters and other matters, I will now turn to an overview of the methods of oversight and answer the research question.

The two methods of oversight introduced by McCubbins and Schwartz and described in chapter 2.3 were police-patrol oversight and fire-alarm oversight. In the same chapter I also listed three methods of information gathering presented by Lupia: direct monitoring, attending to what the agent says about his or her activities, and attending to third party testimony about the agent's actions. The first two methods are linked to police-patrol oversight while the third is linked to fire-alarm oversight.

In this chapter I have aimed to answer my third research question that posed the question on the differences on the method of oversight employed by the committees between their handling of EU-related matter and matters not related to the EU, as advocated by the use of expert consultations by the committees. My hypothesis was that the committees would rely more on the use of fire-alarm oversight during their handling of EU-related matters, primarily due to the difficulties of direct monitoring.

On the whole, although there are certain differences between the handling of matters related to the EU and those not related to the EU, the majority of the experts consulted by the committees can be categorised as representatives of third parties in all types of matters handled by the committees. In addition, the representatives of other ministries, or competing agents, also form a significant share of the experts consulted.

During their handling of U- and E-communications, the committees have also relied more on the consultation of the agent, the ministry in charge of the matter. However, it must be noted that as the ministry responsible of the matter is almost without exception called on to committee hearings, and as the number of experts consulted during the handling of U- and E-communications is low (see discussion in chapter 6.1), the share of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter are unavoidably high. But regardless of this increase, the representatives of the third parties still constitute a majority of the experts consulted.

The one committee that differs from the other committees is the Finance Committee, which relies heavily on the consultations of the ministry in charge of the matter and of researchers and scientists during its handling of reports and statements with an EU-

connection, rather than focusing on the hearings of the representatives of third parties like the other three committees.

Altogether, the committee employ expert consultations primarily in a manner reflecting a fire-alarm oversight, with the representatives of third parties and of competing agents used as information providers, or as according to Lupia's categorisation, the committees primarily attend to third party testimonies about the agent's actions. The expert consultations indicate a fire-alarm oversight in during the handling of both EU-related matters and matters not related to the EU, although during the handling of U- and E-communications, committees seem to also extensively use the second method of information gathering, attending to what the agent says about his or her activities.

My hypothesis for the third research question expected the committees to rely on fire-alarm oversight more clearly during the handling of EU-related matters. As evidenced above, although there is support for a fire-alarm oversight, the data does not support the hypothesis of an *increased* reliance on fire-alarm oversight in the handling of EU-related matters, especially in the handling of U- and E-communications.

In this chapter I have analysed the data according to the research questions posed in chapter 4. In the next, final chapter I will make my final conclusions on the results of the analysis and relate to the wider discussion on the handling of European affairs in the Eduskunta.

## 6. Conclusions

In this thesis I have studied the use of expert consultations in four of the special committees of the Parliament of Finland: Finance, Administration, Agriculture and Forestry, and Commerce Committees. I have examined the differences in the expert consultations by the committee between matters that have an EU-connection and national matters. Previous research has indicated there to be differences in the consultations of the committees between EU-related matters and matter not related to the EU, but before this thesis, the subject has not been systematically researched. The four committees studied in the thesis have been chosen because they have been the most active committees in the handling of European affairs in the Parliament, and because they represent a diverse composition of the committees of the Eduskunta in terms of the policy fields they are responsible for.

Although significant actors in the handling of European affairs in the Parliament, the special committees have received little attention in research, as most attention has been directed towards the Grand Committee, the European Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament. I have analysed the expert consultations of the committee through a theoretical framework derived from the principal-agent theory, by viewing the special committees as principals of the executive, and of their counterpart ministries, which act as agents of the Parliament. Although the theory has proved its use in the study of parliamentary committees over the decades, it has not been extensively used to study the handling of European affairs in national parliaments.

For this thesis I have gathered data on the expert consultations of the four committees during their handling of all reports and statements adopted by the committees in the year 2013. The reports and statements adopted by the committees have been categorised based on their content and the prevalence of European legislation as the basis of the matter at hand. The experts consulted by the committees have also been categorised based on their backgrounds and the institutions they represent. The data was analysed through statistical methods and is presented in the thesis primarily through cross tabulations.

The results of this thesis show that there are certain differences in the consultation of experts performed by the committees, but that the largest differences can be found

between the consultations during the handling of U- and E-communications, and consultation during the handling of other matters. Committee hearings during the handling of statements and reports on, for example, Government bills differ only little regarding whether the Government bills have an EU-connection or not. This indicates that, regarding expert consultations, the committee members do not differentiate between national legislation that is intended to implement EU directives from legislation that is of national origin without an EU-connection.

In this thesis I presented three research questions, which were all analysed in separate sub-chapters in chapter 5. The first research question concerned the average number of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of reports and statements, and especially the difference between EU-related matters and other matters. On the basis of the theoretical framework and previous research on the handling of European affairs in the Parliament, I presented two contrasting hypotheses on the number of experts consulted by the committees: that the committees would consult more experts during the handling of EU-related matters, or that they hear less experts during the handling of EU-related matters.

In my analysis I found that the second hypothesis, the committees consult less experts during the handling of EU-related matters, received more support from the data. There are no significant differences in the average number of experts consulted between EU-connected matters and matter without an EU-connection when observing only reports and statements adopted on “national” matters, such as Government bills or Government reports. But, the differences between the handling of U- and E-communications and other matters are clear: the committees consulted fewer experts during the handling of U- and E-communications than during any other matters.

The categorisation of the different types of matters provided an additional result in the number of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of reports and statements, although not directly related to the research questions. Previous quantitative research on expert consultations has shown that committees consult more experts during the handling of reports than statements. U- and E-communications compose such a large share of all statements adopted by the committees, that the lower number of experts consulted during the handling of these matters significantly lowers the average number of experts consulted during the handling of all statements. When U- and E-

communications are excluded from the data and only “national matters” are considered, committees in fact consult more experts during the handling of statements than reports, something not recognised in previous studies.

The second research question dealt with the backgrounds of the experts consulted by the committees. The question referred to the possible differences in the backgrounds of experts consulted between matters related to the EU and matters not related to the EU. My hypothesis was that during the handling of EU-related matters, the committees would consult more independent experts, such as researchers and scientists.

Again, the most significant differences can be found in the handling of U- and E-communications, where the percentage of the representatives of the ministry in charge of the matter was clearly higher than in the handling of other matters. Otherwise there are no significant differences, and when reports with an EU-connection and reports without an EU-connection are compared against each other, there is hardly any difference at all. The hypothesis presented does not receive much support from the data, when examining the data on all of the committees. In the Finance Committee, however, the use of the representatives of science, research and learning institutions was clearly higher during the handling of matters related to the EU.

With the third research question I examined the possible differences in the method of oversight performed by the committees between EU-related matters and matters not related to the EU. The two methods of oversight introduced in the theoretical framework are fire-alarm oversight and police-patrol oversight. My hypothesis was that, due to the increased difficulties of directly monitoring decision-making at the EU-level, the consultations by the committees during their handling of EU-matters would reflect a fire-alarm oversight more clearly than consultation performed during the handling matters not related to the EU.

The data indicates that the compositions of experts consulted by the committees do in fact indicate that the committees use expert consultations according to the tenants of fire-alarm oversight. There are however no significant differences during the handling of EU-related matters and other matters in this regard. The hypothesis presented did therefore not receive strong support from the data, especially in the case of U- and E-communications. The share of the representatives of the agent was significantly higher

during the handling of U- and E-communications, indicating that during the handling of these types of matters the committees are more interested in hearing from the representatives of the agent than in other matters. It must also be noted that fire-alarm oversight and police-patrol oversight are not mutually exclusive and committees may be accomplished direct monitoring through other means as well, even though expert consultations by the committees do indicate a fire-alarm oversight.

U- and E-communications form the most significant part of the parliamentary scrutiny of European affairs in Finland. It is through them that the Parliament receives information on the proposals and future policies of the EU while those policies and proposals are still in their preparatory stages in the Commission. It has been declared in many documents that the objective of Finland is to influence EU decision-making as early as possible. This applies also to the Parliament, which has stated so itself many times in the past. U- and E-communication are submitted to the Parliament at the time, when the Parliament should, by its own admission, try to influence decision-making at the EU-level.

The results of this thesis show that the use of experts in committee hearings is mostly concentrated around the handling of Government bills or Government reports, regardless of whether the legislation is connected to EU-level decision-making or not. In the handling of EU legislation, these matters correlate with the national implementation of directives, or put in another way, the stage of the EU legislative process, when the directives and regulations have already been adopted into law and the most consequential decisions have already been made. That the consultation of experts by the committees is more extensive at this stage of the legislative process does not fully support the Parliament's objective of influencing at an early stage of the legislative process

But we must be cautious in making too far-reaching conclusions purely based on this data. As others have noted (see Raunio 2000; Neunreither, 2006), Members of national Parliaments can also acquire information on EU matters through other means than official committee hearings. Information gathering can take place through various informal means, even outside parliamentary settings, for example through political parties. It can't be said that the low number of experts consulted by the committees during the handling of U- and E-communications shows a clear and definite lack of

interest of the members of the special committees in gaining information on EU legislations in its preparatory stages. It might also be true that the MPs are satisfied with the information provided to them by the civil servants of the ministries, and therefore do not see an added value in further consultations. At the same time, in the past MPs have been critical of the information provided to them by the ministries, especially regarding U- and E-communications.

On the basis of the data gathered for this thesis, it is impossible to deduce the reasons for the lower number of experts consulted by the committees when comparing U- and E-communications with the handling of other matters, nor has it been my intention. The committee members could feel that they are sufficiently informed about the issues through information gathered by other means than committee hearings. The MPs could be uninterested in EU-legislation due to personal preferences or the remoteness of decision-making at the EU-level, and wish therefore to concentrate more on national legislation. The MPs could also hold their powers of influence to be so minor regarding decisions reached at the EU-level, that their actions would be inconsequential in any case, and that the consultations of experts during the handling of U- and E-communications could be considered futile. We would need further research on the motives of the MPs and the reasons for the lower number of experts to be able to properly answer these questions.



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## Annex I. Number of Reports and Statements adopted by the Committees

Number of reports and statements adopted by the Finance committee in 2013 per each type of matter

	Matters w/o EU-connection	Matters w/ EU-connection	U-Communication	E-communication	Total
Reports	31	4	N/A	N/A	35
Statements	3	1	3	1	8

Number of reports and statements adopted by the Administration committee in 2013 per each type of matter

	Matters w/o EU-connection	Matters w/ EU-connection	U-Communication	E-communication	Total
Reports	20	6	N/A	N/A	26
Statements	8	2	16	4	30

Number of reports and statements adopted by the Agriculture and Forestry committee in 2013 per each type of matter

	Matters w/o EU-connection	Matters w/ EU-connection	U-Communication	E-communication	Total
Reports	16	6	N/A	N/A	22
Statements	7	1	17	12	30

Number of reports and statements adopted by the Commerce committee in 2013 per each type of matter

	Matters w/o EU-connection	Matters w/ EU-connection	U-Communication	E-communication	Total
Reports	25	13	N/A	N/A	38
Statements	7	2	6	29	44

## Annex II. Number of experts consulted by the Committees

Average number of experts consulted by consulted by the Finance committee in 2013 per each type of statement or report

	Matter w/o EU-connection	Matter w/ EU-connection	U-communication	E-communication
Reports	11.0	5.8	N/A	N/A
Statements	7.3	10.0	4.0	6.0

Average number of experts consulted by consulted by the Administration committee in 2013 per each type of statement or report

	Matter w/o EU-connection	Matter w/ EU-connection	U-communication	E-communication
Reports	19.2	21.7	N/A	N/A
Statements	21.0	22.0	4.9	2.8

Average number of experts consulted by consulted by the Agriculture and Forestry committee in 2013 per each type of statement or report

	Matter w/o EU-connection	Matter w/ EU-connection	U-communication	E-communication
Reports	14.9	13.3	N/A	N/A
Statements	16.6	15.0	6.8	5.8

Average number of experts consulted by consulted by the Commerce committee in 2013 per each type of statement or report

	Matter w/o EU-connection	Matter w/ EU-connection	U-communication	E-communication
Reports	12.0	10.5	N/A	N/A
Statements	12.6	19.0	7.1	6.3



### Annex III. The Backgrounds of the Experts Consulted by the Committees

Number of experts consulted by the Finance Committee during the handling of reports and statements, frequencies and percentages.

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Municipal, regional	Labour organisations	Business organisations	Civic organisations	Corporations	Science, research	Others	Total
Reports w/o EU-connection	46	47	51	17	29	88	30	15	17		340
	13.5 %	13.8 %	15.0 %	5.0 %	8.5 %	25.9 %	8.8 %	4.4 %	5.0 %		100.0 %
Reports w/ EU- connection	7	1	3	1	1	4	3	0	3		23
	30.4 %	4.3 %	13.0 %	4.3 %	4.3 %	17.4 %	13.0 %	0.0 %	13.0 %		100.0 %
Statements w/o EU-connection	2	15	4	1	0	0	0	0	0		22
	9.1 %	68.2 %	18.2 %	4.5 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %		100.0 %
Statements w/ EU-connection	2	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	3		10
	20.0 %	20.0 %	10.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	20.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	30.0 %		100.0 %
U- communication	5	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1		12
	41.7 %	8.3 %	25.0 %	8.3 %	0.0 %	8.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	8.3 %		100.0 %
E- communication	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		6
	66.7 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	33.3 %		100.0 %
All reports and statements	66	66	62	20	30	95	33	15	26		413
	16.0 %	16.0 %	15.0 %	4.8 %	7.3 %	23.0 %	8.0 %	3.6 %	6.3 %		100.0 %

Number of experts consulted by the Administration Committee during the handling of reports and statements, frequencies and percentages.

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Municipal, regional	Labour organisations	Business organisations	Civic organisations	Corporations	Science, research	Others	Total
Reports w/o EU-connection	38	72	117	53	44	12	12	5	26	4	383
	9.9 %	18.8 %	30.5 %	13.8 %	11.5 %	3.1 %	3.1 %	1.3 %	6.8 %	1.0 %	100.0 %
Reports w/ EU- connection	9	28	37	19	10	9	7	1	10	0	130
	6.9 %	21.5 %	28.5 %	14.6 %	7.7 %	6.9 %	5.4 %	.8 %	7.7 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
Statements w/o EU-connection	16	42	48	18	22	7	5	4	6	0	168
	9.5 %	25.0 %	28.6 %	10.7 %	13.1 %	4.2 %	3.0 %	2.4 %	3.6 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
Statements w/ EU-connection	3	11	12	5	3	3	1	0	4	2	44
	6.8 %	25.0 %	27.3 %	11.4 %	6.8 %	6.8 %	2.3 %	0.0 %	9.1 %	4.5 %	100.0 %
U- communication	18	22	20	2	6	5	1	4	1	0	79
	22.8 %	27.8 %	25.3 %	2.5 %	7.6 %	6.3 %	1.3 %	5.1 %	1.3 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
E- communication	5	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	11
	45.5 %	0.0 %	9.1 %	36.4 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	9.1 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
All reports and statements	89	175	235	101	85	36	26	14	48	6	815
	10.9 %	21.5 %	28.8 %	12.4 %	10.4 %	4.4 %	3.2 %	1.7 %	5.9 %	.7 %	100.0 %

Number of experts consulted by the Agriculture and Forestry Committee during the handling of reports and statements, frequencies and percentages.

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Municipal, regional	Labour organisations	Business organisations	Civic organisations	Corporations	Science, research	Others	Total
Reports w/o EU-connection	28	29	38	9	8	52	41	10	22	1	238
	11.8 %	12.2 %	16.0 %	3.8 %	3.4 %	21.8 %	17.2 %	4.2 %	9.2 %	.4 %	100.0 %
Reports w/ EU- connection	12	10	19	6	3	16	12	1	1	0	80
	15.0 %	12.5 %	23.8 %	7.5 %	3.8 %	20.0 %	15.0 %	1.3 %	1.3 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
Statements w/o EU-connection	9	17	23	3	0	30	12	11	11	0	116
	7.8 %	14.7 %	19.8 %	2.6 %	0.0 %	25.9 %	10.3 %	9.5 %	9.5 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
Statements w/ EU-connection	1	5	2	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	15
	6.7 %	33.3 %	13.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	26.7 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	20.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
U- communication	24	17	16	3	0	37	2	1	13	2	115
	20.9 %	14.8 %	13.9 %	2.6 %	0.0 %	32.2 %	1.7 %	.9 %	11.3 %	1.7 %	100.0 %
E- communication	16	15	7	2	0	18	5	0	6	0	69
	23.2 %	21.7 %	10.1 %	2.9 %	0.0 %	26.1 %	7.2 %	0.0 %	8.7 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
All reports and statements	90	93	105	23	11	157	72	23	56	3	633
	14.2 %	14.7 %	16.6 %	3.6 %	1.7 %	24.8 %	11.4 %	3.6 %	8.8 %	.5 %	100.0 %

Number of experts consulted by the Commerce Committee during the handling of reports and statements, frequencies and percentages.

	Ministry in charge	Other ministries	Other governmental	Municipal, regional	Labour organisations	Business organisations	Civic organisations	Corporations	Science, research	Others	Total
Reports w/o EU-connection	32	29	51	11	21	77	12	45	20	2	300
	10.7 %	9.7 %	17.0 %	3.7 %	7.0 %	25.7 %	4.0 %	15.0 %	6.7 %	.7 %	100.0 %
Reports w/ EU- connection	18	15	27	2	6	27	14	22	6	0	137
	13.1 %	10.9 %	19.7 %	1.5 %	4.4 %	19.7 %	10.2 %	16.1 %	4.4 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
Statements w/o EU-connection	8	14	10	1	7	20	4	12	9	3	88
	9.1 %	15.9 %	11.4 %	1.1 %	8.0 %	22.7 %	4.5 %	13.6 %	10.2 %	3.4 %	100.0 %
Statements w/ EU-connection	1	6	1	7	3	9	0	3	4	4	38
	2.6 %	15.8 %	2.6 %	18.4 %	7.9 %	23.7 %	0.0 %	7.9 %	10.5 %	10.5 %	100.0 %
U- communication	36	25	37	2	2	64	18	13	8	2	207
	17.4 %	12.1 %	17.9 %	1.0 %	1.0 %	30.9 %	8.7 %	6.3 %	3.9 %	1.0 %	100.0 %
E- communication	9	6	2	0	0	15	1	5	0	0	38
	23.7 %	15.8 %	5.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	39.5 %	2.6 %	13.2 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
All reports and statements	104	95	128	23	39	212	49	100	47	11	808
	12.9 %	11.8 %	15.8 %	2.8 %	4.8 %	26.2 %	6.1 %	12.4 %	5.8 %	1.4 %	100.0 %

