Socializing the Eastern neighbourhood? The European Parliament and the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly[i]

Hrant KOSTANYAN & Bruno VANDECASTEELE

Introduction

As pointed out in the introduction of this volume, one can notice a growing academic interest in the role of the European Parliament (EP) since 1979. With regard to the external role of the EP, a considerable part of the literature has focused on the EP's powers in shaping external policies of the European Union (EU) (see also e.g. Crum, 2006; Koutrakos, 2011). However, the direct bilateral or multilateral relations of the EP with Parliaments of third countries have received much less scholarly attention (for an exception, see e.g. Corbett, Jacobs, & Shackleton, 2005). In this chapter, we link the analysis of the EP's external role to the study of (European) socialization. This strand of the literature has considerably expanded the knowledge and debate on the processes driving change at different policy levels within and outside of the EU. Checkel (2003; 2005) greatly contributed to the study of socialization, *inter alia* by conceptualising (conditions for) different levels of socialization: strategic calculation, role playing and normative suasion (see *infra*). Most research on European socialization focuses on norm transfer from international organizations to individual States (see e.g. Schimmelfennig, 2005; Schimmelfennig, Engert, & Knobel, 2005; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011) or adaptation of EU officials to group norms of the institutions (e.g. Beyers, 2005; Hooghe, 2005; Juncos, & Pomorska, 2006), including in the EP (Scully, 2005). The EU's engagement with and norm transfer to specific institutions or actors in third non-EU countries has been mostly neglected (see e.g. Smith, 2011), and no research has been published thus far on multilateral socialization of the EP.

Since 2011, the EP and the Parliaments of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries – Belarus,[ii] Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan – cooperate multilaterally in the framework of the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly (EuroNest PA). Before 2011, the EP and the Parliaments of the EaP countries already collaborated on a bilateral basis through Parliamentary Cooperation Committees (PCCs) established under Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), and delegations. After the establishment of the multilateral EuroNest PA, the PCCs and delegations continue to exist along with the Euronest PA and are invited by the latter to collaborate with it (EuroNest PA 2013e, p. 13).

As we will point out *infra*, the EP tries to socialize the Parliaments of the EaP countries within the setting of the EuroNest PA. Consequently, studying the EP from the perspective of socialization brings added value to scholarly knowledge about the EP's role in the world. The chapter addresses two main research questions: (i) what are the instruments and opportunities for the EP to socialize the national Parliaments of the EaP countries, and (ii) if socialization takes place, what is the nature and range of this socialization? Is the possible change in behaviour and the transfer of norms limited to strategic calculation, or are there also signs of role playing or even normative suasion (see e.g. Checkel, 2005)? The sources for the data gathered consist mostly of official documents. These were complemented with secondary literature such as journal and news articles, as well as six interviews – one of which in the form of written communication. The interviews were conducted with EU officials of different nationalities and statuses, in order to get a broader understanding of the EP's aims in the framework of the EuroNest PA.

The chapter is divided in four main parts. First, we consider the definitions and characteristics of the different types of socialization. Second, we outline the organization of the EP-EaP parliamentary cooperation, with emphasis on the recent changes in the institutional architecture. This section also discusses the instruments through which the EP

can socialize the EaP Parliaments. Third, we examine the results of the three plenary sessions of the EuroNest PA that have taken place between 2011 and 2013, providing a more profound insight in EP-EaP Parliaments socialization. Finally, the concluding section reviews and summarizes the main findings of the chapter, and briefly reflects on future developments of EU-EaP parliamentary cooperation.

1. Socialization and the European Parliament

In this chapter, we use the definition of socialization as formulated by Checkel (2005): socialization is a process during which socialized actors (socializees) are inducted into the norms and rules of a given community (socializers), with sustained compliance due to internalization of these norms as a result. If socialization is successful, the logic of action of the socializee changes from what March and Olsen (1998) called a *logic of consequences* to a *logic of appropriateness*. The extent to which these norms are internalized can vary; there are basically three types of norm internalization, corresponding with three mechanisms of socialization (Checkel, 2005; see also Schimmelfennig, 2005; Warkotsch, 2007).

A first mechanism is *strategic calculation*: the socializee displays desired behaviour in response to positive and negative incentives, which can be social (e.g. status, shaming) as well as material (e.g. financial assistance, sanctions). Strategic calculation alone does not lead to socialization and internalization of norms, but it can be a first step towards preference change. This mechanism is most likely to operate when the socializee expects the benefits of adapting its behaviour (or pressurizing others, e.g. governments, to change their behaviour) to be larger than the costs.

A second mechanism is *role playing*: the socializee behaves according to the group norms because it is considered appropriate in a certain setting, but his/her ideas and

preferences remain unchanged. This so-called Type I internalization or routinization (see also Johnston, 2001) is most likely to occur in settings where agents have long, sustained and intense contacts with each other.

The third and most far-reaching mechanism is *normative suasion*: agents actively and reflectively internalize new understandings of appropriate norms, and behave accordingly (Type II internalization or rationalization). Normative suasion is most likely to take place when the socializee is in a novel and uncertain environment, has few prior beliefs that are inconsistent with the socializer's message, when the socializer holds a dominant and authoritative position within the group to which the socializee belongs or wishes to belong, when the socializer does not lecture or demand but acts according to principles of serious deliberative argument, and when interactions take place in less politicized and more informal settings.

Socialization has thus far been mostly studied between the EU and individual governments or within the EU institutions. This chapter extends the application of this theoretical framework to inter-parliamentary cooperation and socialization. The volume at hand discusses how the EP plays an increasingly active role in the EU's external policies. This is not less the case in the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbourhood: the EP is active in – *inter alia* – trade (European Parliament, 2012a), democracy (European Parliament, 2012b) and human rights issues (e.g. European Parliament, 2012d; 2012c) with regard to the EaP countries. In sum, it is clear that the EP wishes to play a role in transferring 'European' values to the Eastern neighbours of the EU. The instruments available to the EP for socializing the EaP Parliaments are discussed in the next section.

2. Structure and functioning of the EuroNest PA

2.1 Origins and members of the EuroNest PA

The existing literature calls the 2009 Lisbon Treaty (LT) the *Treaty of Parliaments* (see Introduction to this volume): it reinforced the role of the EP in the EU's legislative process and external policies, and strengthened the control of national Parliaments over EU decision-making. However, the EP's role in EU policies towards the EaP is somewhat atypical in this respect, for two main reasons. First, although the conceptualization and establishment of the EuroNest PA took place in the same period as the negotiations, signature and ratification of the LT, both developments were not interconnected and took place in separate settings. Second, and contrary to the overall strengthening of the role of national Parliaments in EU decision-making, the Parliaments of the EU Member States do not play a substantial role in the EuroNest PA, which is reserved to the EP (see *infra* in this section).

The idea to establish the EuroNest PA dates back to 2006 and was preceded by a series of conferences with representatives from the EP, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as Belarusian opposition members. It was further developed two years later in a Communication of the European Commission (2008) and was taken up in the constitutive document of the Eastern Partnership – the Prague Declaration – which was adopted during the first EU-EaP summit in Prague in 2009. The participants of the summit invited the parliamentarians from the EU and the EaP countries to establish a joint multilateral parliamentary assembly (Council of the European Union, 2009, 7 May, p. 10). The goal of the Assembly was and is to accelerate the political and economic integration of the EaP countries and the EU as well as to enhance people-to-people contacts and engage more actively in inter-cultural dialogue. The EuroNest PA is based ´*on mutual interests and commitments as well as on the principles of differentiation, shared ownership and responsibility*´ (EuroNest PA, 2013e, p. 1).

Although the EuroNest PA is – in principle – a multilateral framework for cooperation between the EP and the Parliaments of the six EaP countries (European Parliament, 2009), the Belarusian Parliament is not represented thus far. Discussions regarding the participation of Belarus were even the main reason for the delay in launching the Assembly (Ćwiek-Karpowicz & Wojna, 2010): the idea to establish the EuroNest PA was formally declared in 2009, but it took almost two years until the forum was operational. Since the EP consistently criticizes the state of democracy and the human rights situation in Belarus (see e.g. European Parliament, 2011; 2012d) and ´the EuroNest PA is a dialogue between real members of Parliament, not between people appointed by a dictator´ (Interview D), it would be controversial if the EP engaged with the Belarusian parliament. Prior to the adoption of rules for EP representation in its relations with third countries, MEPs thus had to choose between four options: invite a delegation of the Belarusian Parliament, invite a *sui generis* delegation from Belarus – which could be composed of parliamentarians and representatives of the opposition and/or civil society,[iii] not involve Belarus at all, or include Belarus in the EuroNest PA while putting its active participation ´on hold´ (Interview C, D, F). Eventually, the EP opted for the latter solution and suspended the Belarusian participation. EuroNest decided that Belarus ´will be welcomed once political requirements will have been fulfilled´ (EuroNest PA, n.d.). In order to meet the political requirements, the Parliament should be elected according to OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections, and commit itself to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, pluralistic democracy and the rule of law (Buzek, 2011; EuroNest PA, 2011a, art. 3).

The EuroNest PA currently hosts sixty members of the EP and ten members from each EaP countries' Parliament (excluding Belarus). Appointments in the EuroNest PA from both the EP's and the EaP countries' sides are done in a manner that ´the distribution of the various

political groups and delegations represented is reflected as far as possible´ (EuroNest PA 2013e, p. 1).

The EuroNest PA is institutionally quite similar to other multilateral parliamentary assemblies in which the EP participates, such as the EU-African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM). However, there are two important differences between the EuroNest PA and the PA-UfM. In the latter, the EU delegation consists of 49 members of the EP and three members of each EU national Parliament, while in the EuroNest PA there is no formal role[iv] for national Parliaments of the EU. In fact, the EuroNest parliamentary cooperation is the only format for EU-EaP cooperation where the EU Member States are not involved; member States do have a role in intergovernmental, business, and regional cooperation. This situation has been criticized by some representatives of national Parliaments (interview A, E). When enquired about this, an MEP responded that ´it would be much more complicated if national parliamentarians would participate. There would be much more discussion on what we should do. […] It's already complicated enough with the EaP countries´ (Interview D). The absence of the national Parliaments thus strengthens the role of the EP not only with regard to the EaP countries, but also vis-à-vis the EU and its Member States. A second difference between the PA-UfM and the EuroNest PA is that, in the former, the EU representatives are a minority (130 on a total of 280), whereas in the EuroNest PA, the EP has an equal number of votes as compared to the EaP countries, and as long as Belarus does not participate the EP even has a *de facto* majority (60 on a total of 110). Since most decisions are taken by simple majority, this entails a potential (temporary) dominance of the EP over the EaP representatives.

2.2 Components of the EuroNest PA

The EuroNest PA elects a *Bureau*, which consists of co-Presidents and vice-Presidents. One of the co-Presidents is elected from the members of the EP and the other from the EaP deputies. One parliamentarian from each EaP country is elected as a vice-President with exception of the country whose deputy is elected co-President. This is matched with an equal number of vice-Presidents originating from members of the EP.

The Bureau meets at least twice a year and plays a key coordinating role, both internally and externally. Internally, the Bureau drafts the agenda and procedures for plenary sessions of the EuroNest PA and authorizes the committees to draft, *inter alia,* reports, resolutions and recommendations. Externally, the Bureau is responsible for maintaining relations with other bodies and actors involved in the EaP such as the EaP Summit, ministerial conferences, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the officials in EaP multilateral thematic platforms, Ambassadors, as well as civil society organisations. The Bureau can invite the relevant actors to participate in meetings of the committees and working groups as well as in the plenary sessions of the EuroNest PA. The Bureau of the EuroNest PA also decides on creating working groups for a specific period of time to deal with a specific aspect of the EaP or to send fact-finding missions to the EU or the EaP countries. The EuroNest PA can decide on prolonging the mandate of the working groups or on abolishing them (EuroNest PA, 2013e, pp. 12-13). The number of members in the working groups has to be ten – one member from each EaP country, matched by five members of the European Parliament.

Currently, the EuroNest PA has two *Working Groups*. One of them discusses the Rules of Procedure, the other focuses on Belarus. The latter is charged with investigating and making recommendations to the Euronest PA on how it could support Belarus to meet the requirements for the Belarusian Delegation to fill its still vacant seats in the EuroNest PA. Therefore, the Working Group on Belarus ´*may take contacts with the Institutions of Belarus,*

with the civil society of the country, with the other EU Institutions, with the EU Member States and other players concerned; the Working Group may hold hearings and organise visits to the country, in agreement with the Bureau´ (EuroNest PA, 2012a, p. 2). In the words of one EP official, the Working Group on Belarus is thus formed to ´compensate´ the absence of a Belarusian Delegation in the EuroNest PA (Interview C).

For the purpose of examining important aspects related to the EaP, the EuroNest PA has set up four *Standing Committees* that thematically mirror the four platforms of the EaP multilateral framework: 1. Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy, 2. Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies, 3. Committee on Energy Security and 4. Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society.

Being the *Parliamentary Assembly* of the EaP, the EuroNest PA conducts discussions and consultations as well as adopts resolutions and recommendations concerning the EaP in general or concerning its specific aspects. Based on the request of the co-chairs of the Committees, the Bureau decides how many reports can be voted in the plenary sessions of the EuroNest PA. Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure also allows for urgent motions for resolutions (EuroNest PA, 2013e, pp. 5-6).

The EuroNest PA holds plenary sessions once a year on the basis of rotation. One of the meetings takes place in the facilities of the EP in Brussels or Luxembourg, the subsequent meeting convenes in the capital of one of the EaP counties. Up until now, there have been a constituent meeting and three plenary meetings (see *infra*); the fourth meeting, which was to take place in Yerevan in November 2014, was cancelled due to the electoral year in the EU and busy agendas in other EaP countries (EuroNest PA, 2014).

The EuroNest PA also has a role of scrutinizing the EU 'executive' – the EEAS and the European Commission. This forum is therefore one of the main tools of the EP to

influence the EU decision-making *vis-à-vis* the EaP (Kostanyan & Orbie, 2013). The members of the Assembly can submit written questions to the Council, the European Commission, the ministerial bodies of the EaP and the Presidency of the Council responsible for organising the EaP Summit. The Bureau facilitates the presence of the relevant 'executives'. Questions are subject to the Bureau's ruling on their admissibility. The members of the EuroNest PA can also ask questions orally, to be submitted in a written form to the Bureau too, which then decides on their admissibility. In addition, at the request of twenty members of the EuroNest PA, the Bureau is charged with inviting the ministerial bodies of the EaP, the Presidency of the Council responsible for organising the EaP Summit, the Council and the European Commission to answer questions of the deputies (EuroNest PA, 2013e, pp. 10-11).

3. Socialization during the plenary sessions of the EuroNest PA?

3.1 The constituent meeting of 3 September 2011

The constituent meeting of the EuroNest PA, that took place on 3 September 2011 in Brussels, focused mainly on the body's internal procedures and appointments (EuroNest PA, 2011b): it adopted the Constituent Act (EuroNest PA 2011a) and the Rules of Procedure of the EuroNest PA, and elected the Bureau, its two co-Presidents (Mr Borys Tarasyuk on behalf of the EaP countries, and Mr Kristian Vigenin on behalf of the EP) and eight vice-Presidents. It also adopted a decision on setting up four Standing Committees and approved their Rules of Procedure. Finally, the deputies adopted a decision on setting up of the Working Groups, on the Rules of Procedure and on Belarus.

3.2 The first plenary session of 14-15 September 2011

The first ordinary plenary session of the EuroNest PA took place on 14-15 September 2011 in Strasbourg. The main topic on the agenda was a draft resolution with recommendations to the EaP Summit that would take place later that year. However, the meeting passed off in a tense atmosphere, and the planned resolution could not be adopted. There were disagreements between the EP and EaP representatives, but also between the EaP countries themselves, notably Armenia and Azerbaijan (Donskis 2011; Tarasyuk 2011). The main stumbling block was the difference in positions between the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations on references to ´territorial integrity´ and ´right to self-determination´ in the final statement. In addition, as a result of delays because of recounts, discussions and voting confusion, most MEPs left the meeting room in a hurry at the end of the two-day session since they had to attend a regular EP plenary (RFERL 2011, 16 September). Commenting on this chaotic start of the EuroNest PA, which lacked concrete results, Tarasyuk (2011) complained that the EaP exists on paper but not in practice, and stated that bilateral cooperation between individual EU members and EaP countries is much more significant than the EaP framework.

In the early stages of the EuroNest cooperation, there was no proof that any form of socialization had taken place in the EaP countries' Parliaments. The EP representatives could not convince their counterparts from the EaP to agree on a joint statement, and the delegations of the different Parliaments did not consider themselves as belonging to one region, contrary to how the EP views the EaP countries.

3.3 The second plenary session of 2-4 April 2012

The problems that the EuroNest PA experienced in its constitutive meeting continued in the second plenary. Since the session took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, the conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijani members of the Assembly became even more pronounced than in the first plenary. Moreover, Azerbaijan used the opportunity to promote its agenda and attack Armenia up to the level of its President (President of Azerbaijan, 2012). An EU official shared his frustration over the proceedings which ran against a prior agreement:

´Aliyev appeared at the plenary session of this EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly and used that forum for one third of the time to criticize Armenia and the Government of Armenia on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. It was totally outside of the agenda. I mean, we have to face those realities. [But] it was outside of the context. Why? Because the Nagorno-Karabakh is a subject under the OSCE Minsk Group. We, as the EU, are supportive of the OSCE Minsk Group work because France is a co-chair. So, there is a channel for negotiating and resolving the conflict. EU should not be using another forum, especially this one in the parliamentary cooperation, again and again and again to be pushing what I call the bilateral agenda. So there are right formats to ensure that conflicts are discussed, negotiated and resolved´ (Interview B).

However, as opposed to the first plenary that failed to pass any resolution and despite the tensions between Azerbaijani and Armenian deputies, the members of the EuroNest PA managed to agree on five resolutions. Although the contents of the resolutions were watered down in order to get the largest possible number of deputies on board, these resolutions are important, since they are the first substantive result of the EuroNest PA. The adopted resolutions dealt with (1) challenges for the future of democracy and free and independent media (EuroNest PA, 2012b), (2) trade agreements between the EU and the EaP countries (EuroNest PA, 2012f), (3) energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy

infrastructure (EuroNest PA, 2012c), (4) the strengthening of civil society and dialogue with the Governments in the EaP (EuroNest PA, 2012d), and (5) the sentencing of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko (EuroNest PA, 2012e, p. 1) - in which the EuroNest PA called upon the Ukrainian authorities to facilitate a fair and transparent process of appeal, and requested that the Verkhovna Rada review the criminal code that was applied against Tymoshenko.

The adoption of concrete resolutions by the EuroNest PA indicates some progress in EU-EaP multilateral parliamentary cooperation. The topics discussed reflected much of the positions taken by the EP on issues related to the Eastern neighbours of the EU, which could point to some form of socialization. However, given the tense atmosphere in which the Assembly discussed the resolutions, it is not clear to what extent the resolutions represent the genuine positions of the members. In any case, the EP delegation seems to have increased its leverage on the resolutions adopted, as compared to the first session.

3.4 The third plenary session of 28-29 May 2013

The third ordinary session took place in Brussels. Belarus was still not formally represented, due to a ´lack of an internationally recognized Parliament´ (European Parliament, 2013). However, the Working Group on Belarus held consultations with members of the Belarusian opposition, as well as with representatives from civil society organisations and independent media. This was due to the fact that, as EP President Martin Schulz explained, the EP is ´*not willing to accept the fact that the citizens of Belarus are still deprived of freedom and basic fundamental rights. We will always uphold democratic values and support the people in Belarus in every way we can*´ (ENPI info centre 2013).

During the plenary meeting, the participants appointed Mr Evgeni Kirilov as new co-chair for the EP[v] and adopted four resolutions (European Parliament, 2013). They also called on the EU to increase the budget for assistance to EaP countries in the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 (European Parliament, 2013). Furthermore, the delegates expressed their hope to achieve a breakthrough in their relations – including with Belarus – at the November 2013 EaP summit in Vilnius, but not at the expense of democracy, rule of law, and peace.

The third session adopted resolutions on (1) regional security challenges (EuroNest PA, 2013d), (2) approximation of national legislation in EaP countries with EU legislation in the economic field (EuroNest PA, 2013a), (3) EU-EaP energy interconnections and harmonization of the energy market (EuroNest PA, 2013c), and (4) combating poverty and social exclusion in the EaP (EuroNest PA 2013b). Despite these resolutions being adopted, the tense atmosphere and the divisions between the EU and the EaP countries, between EaP countries and between political parties, that marked the first and second plenaries, continued during the third plenary. Armenian and Azeri representatives continued to struggle about references to Nagorno-Karabakh and about the release and glorification of Safarov,[vi] and members of ruling and opposition parties of Ukraine and Georgia conflicted about the fate of former top politicians, respectively Timoshenko and Merabishvili (former Georgian Prime Minister and an ally of former President Saakashvili[vii]). In these circumstances, each member of the EuroNest PA engaged in promoting and defending its own agenda rather than engaging in genuine socialization processes with others.

Conclusion

Three aspects of the EuroNest PA illustrate that, in the setting of the EuroNest PA, the EU takes up the role of *teaching* norms and rules, while the EaP countries are expected to *learn* and/or *implement* them. First, the composition of the assembly is telling: the EP has 60 delegates, whereas the EaP countries send only 10 representatives each. The EP thus accounts for (in practice more than) half of the members of the EuroNest PA. In a way this is normal, since the EP represents far more people than the EaP delegates. Still, it results in a certain dominance of the EP over the Parliaments of the EaP countries, which is different from, for example, the PA-UfM. Second, apart from some differences, the EuroNest PA is institutionally similar to the other multilateral forums through which the EP cooperates with third countries' Parliaments. In this manner, the EP sets a standard of how multilateral cooperation between Parliaments is to be organized, and the EaP delegations comply to this. Third, the recommendations adopted by the EuroNest PA send different messages to the EaP countries on the one hand and to the EU on the other. The EaP countries are encouraged to carry out and implement reforms, whereas the EU is called upon to support these reforms through financial and technical aid. The norms promoted by the EU are thus taken as a point of reference. Given the numerical supremacy of the EP and the EU-designed format in which the meetings take place, this does not come as a surprise.

With regard to the first research question of this chapter – which instruments and opportunities the EP has to socialize the Parliaments of the EaP countries – we identify three main techniques for socialization. First, the EP does employ the plenary assembly, the Working Groups and the Committees to familiarize its Eastern partners with its points of view, and tries to influence these countries' Governments through their national Parliaments. Second, in successfully setting the rules of procedure and defining its preferred way of organizing multilateral cooperation as a standard, the EP socializes its partners on how to cooperate multilaterally. Third, the EP applies inclusion and exclusion techniques, cf. its

refusal to allow an official delegation from Belarus, in order to reward or punish EaP national Parliaments. With this technique, the EP tries to compensate for its lack of formal instruments to exert direct pressure on third parties. The EP does not have (financial) *carrots* or *sticks* (e.g. sanctions) through which it can apply conditionality. It therefore applies the only reward/punishment strategy that is available: providing 'status' by allowing or refusing EaP Parliaments to participate in the EuroNest PA. The application of this strategy does not remain without criticism on its coherence. An EP official explained that many members of the EuroNest PA question the current arrangement, suggesting that democracy is not the only criterion for allowing/refusing delegations: *´If Belarus is not in, why is Azerbaijan there? Are Azerbaijan's democratic credentials better than Belarus?´* (Interview C).

The answer to the second research question – on the range and nature of socialization in the EuroNest framework – is twofold. First, we note that very little socialization has taken place thus far. The EuroNest PA often functions as a platform for voicing national or party-related positions and concerns, rather than being a forum for multilateral cooperation. Azerbaijanis use the EuroNest PA to publicly fight Armenia on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Armenians express complaints about the Safarov case. Georgians bring up their concerns on Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as the detained Merabishvili. Ukrainian opposition parties put the imprisonment of former Prime Minister Timoshenko on the agenda. A second observation is that, despite the above-mentioned frictions and bilateral or internal struggles, the EuroNest PA has managed to adopt a fair number of resolutions, which to a large extent reflect the EP's position. This indicates a certain degree of socialization within the EuroNest PA which, however, should not be exaggerated. The Eastern partners at best strategically calculate while participating in the EuroNest PA. The incentives to which they respond are mainly social and not material: they get a higher status and legitimation by participating in this multilateral setting and, perhaps more importantly, they are provided with a forum for

voicing their positions, a forum which they otherwise would not have. In exchange, they display the behaviour as desired by the EP, i.e. they endorse resolutions that promote values and norms the EP usually emphasizes.

The conditions for internalization of norms and thus deeper forms of socialization – role playing and normative suasion – are not fulfilled. For role playing to take place, the contacts between the parties are not sufficiently long and intense. For normative suasion, the initial beliefs of the different delegations show too little consistency with the message of the socializer (the EP), and there are too few interactions in informal settings. Future multilateral parliamentary cooperation and possible socialization between the EU and the EaP will depend on how the fulfilment of these conditions further evolves. Since Ukraine remains a key EaP country and has a central role to play in, inter alia, the EuroNest PA, the socialization potential of the EuroNest PA will also be affected by the further developments in Ukraine, which have substantially changed since early 2014. Critical factors will be the internal unity and sovereignty of the country but also how its neighbours, and in particular Putin´s Russia acts and reacts.

References

Beyers, J. (2005). Multiple Embeddedness and Socialization in Europe: The Case of Council Officials. *International Organization, 59*(4), 899-936.

Buzek, J. (2011). First meeting of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. Retrieved 11 June, 2013: www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-buzek/en/press/press_release/2011/2011-May/press_release-2011-May-3.html.

Checkel, J. T. (2003). "Going Native" In Europe? : Theorizing Social Interaction in European Institutions. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36 (1/2), 209-231.

Checkel, J. T. (2005). International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework. *International Organization*, 59(4), 801-826.

Corbett, R., Jacobs, F., & Shackleton, M. (2005). *The European Parliament*. London: Harper.

Council of the European Union. (2009, 7 May). Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit (8435/09).

Crum, B. (2006). Parliamentarization of the CFSP through informal institution-making? The fifth European Parliament and the EU High Representative. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13(3), 383-401.

Ćwiek-Karpowicz, J., & Wojna, B. (2010, 3-5 November). Paper presented at the Eastern Partnership: A Strategy for 2011 and Beyond, Lublin.

Donskis, L. (2011). First session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly without Belarusian representatives. Retrieved 11 June, 2013: www.donskis.lt/v/fr/1/1_/774

ENPI info centre. (2013). Our job is to hold governments accountable, Euronest hears from European Parliament President, 31 May. Retrieved 11 June, 2013: www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=33285&lang_id=450

EuroNest PA. (2011a). Constituent act of the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly.

EuroNest PA. (2011b). Constituent meeting - minutes.

EuroNest PA. (2012a). Decision on prolongation of the mandate of the Working Group on Belarus of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

EuroNest PA. (2012b). Resolution on challenges for the future of democracy, including the question of free and independent media in Eastern Partnership and EU countries.

EuroNest PA. (2012c). Resolution on energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy infrastructure: developments in the Eastern Partnership and in the EU countries.

EuroNest PA. (2012d). Resolution on Strengthening of civil society in the Eastern Partnership Countries, including the question of cooperation between government and civil society, and the question of the reforms aimed at empowerment of civil society.

EuroNest PA. (2012e). Resolution on the situation of Yulia Tymoshenko.

EuroNest PA. (2012f). Resolution on trade agreements between the EU and the Eastern European Partners, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, and the EU assistance in this field.

EuroNest PA. (2013a). Resolution on approximation of the national legislation of Eastern Partnership countries with EU legislation in the economic field.

EuroNest PA. (2013b). Resolution on combating poverty and social exclusion in the Eastern Partner countries.

EuroNest PA. (2013c). Resolution on energy security in connection with energy market and harmonisation between the Eastern European partner and the EU countries.

EuroNest PA. (2013d). Resolution on regional security challenges in Eastern European partner countries.

EuroNest PA. (2013e). Rules of Procedure Adopted on 3 May 2011 in Brussels, amended on 3 April 2012 in Baku and on 29 May 2013 in Brussels.

EuroNest PA. (2014). Work-plan 2014.

EuroNest PA. (n.d.). What is Euronest. Retrieved 11 June, 2013: www.euronest.europarl.europa.eu/euronest/cms/cache/offonce/home

European Commission. (2008). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Eastern Partnership (COM(2008) 823 final).

European Parliament. (2009). Decision on the number of interparliamentary delegations, delegations to joint parliamentary committees, delegations to parliamentary cooperation committees and multilateral Parliamentary Assemblies (P6_TA(2009)0349).

European Parliament. (2011). Resolution on the situation in Belarus (P7_TA(2011)0022).

European Parliament. (2012a). Resolution of 3 July 2012 on the trade aspects of the Eastern Partnership (2011/2306(INI)).

European Parliament. (2012b). Resolution of 13 December 2012 on the annual report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2011 and the European Union's policy on the matter (2012/2145(INI)).

European Parliament. (2012c). Resolution of 24 May 2012 on Ukraine (2012/2658(RSP)).

European Parliament. (2012d). Resolution on the situation in Belarus after the parliamentary elections of 23 September 2012 (2012/2815(RSP)).

European Parliament. (2013). MEPs and eastern MPs eye breakthrough in relations (REF.: 20130527IPR10533).

Hooghe, L. (2005). Several Roads Lead to International Norms, but Few Via International Socialization: A Case Study of the European Commission. *International Organization*, 59(4), 861-898.

Johnston, A. I. (2001). Treating International Institutions as Social Environments. *International Studies Quarterly*, 45(4), 487-515.

Juncos, A. E., & Pomorska, K. (2006). Playing the Brussels game: Strategic socialisation in the CFSP Council Working Groups. *European Integration online Papers*, 10(11), 1-17.

Kostanyan, H., & Orbie, J. (2013). The EEAS' discretionary power within the Eastern Partnership: in search of the highest possible denominator. *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 13(1), 47-65.

Kostanyan, H., & Vandecasteele, B. (2013). The EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly: The European Parliament as a Socializer of its Counterparts in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood? *College of Europe EU Diplomacy Papers,* 5/2013, 1-22.

Koutrakos, P. (Ed.). (2011). *The European Union's External Relations a Year After Lisbon*. Den Haag: Centre for the Law of EU External Relations.

Lavenex, S., & Schimmelfennig, F. (2011). EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance? *Democratization*, 18(4), 885-909.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1998). The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders. *International Organization*, 52(4), 943-969.

President of Azerbaijan. (2012). Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the opening ceremony of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly's second session in Baku.   Retrieved 12 July 2013: en.president.az/articles/4612.

RFERL. (2011, 16 September). EU Eastern Partnership Assembly Ends In Chaos. Retrieved 11 June, 2013: www.rferl.org/content/eu_eastern_partnership_assembly_ends_in_chaos/24330814.html

Schimmelfennig, F. (2005). Strategic Calculation and International Socialization: Membership Incentives, Party Constellations, and Sustained Compliance in Central and Eastern Europe. *International Organization*, 59(4), 827-860.

Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S., & Knobel, H. (2005). *International socialization in Europe : European organizations, political conditionality and democratic change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scully, R. (2005). *Becoming Europeans: Attitudes, Behaviour, and Socialization in the European Parliament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, N. R. (2011). Europeanization Through Socialization? The EU's Interaction With Civil Society Organizations in Armenia. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 19(4), 385-403.

Tarasyuk, B. (2011). Speech during the conference 'Local and regional dimension of the Eastern Partnership'. Brussels, 9 November.

Warkotsch, A. (2007). International Socialization in Difficult Environments: The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Central Asia. *Democratization,* 14(3), 491-508.

Interviews

Interview A. Sejm (Polish Parliament), EU Affairs Committee, Warsaw, May 2012.

Interview B. European External Action Service, Brussels, June 2012.

Interview C. European Parliament, Brussels, August 2012.

Interview D. Member of the European Parliament, Vilnius, April 2013.

Interview E. European Parliament, Brussels, August 2013.

Interview F. Written communication with official from the European Parliament, October 2013.

[i] This chapter is based on a paper we published in 2013 (see Kostanyan & Vandecasteele, 2013). We would like to thank Sieglinde Gstöhl, the editors of this book, and one official working for the EuroNest PA for their constructive and useful comments on our work.

[ii] The participation of Belarus is currently suspended pending meeting the conditions (see *infra*).

[iii] This option was the subject of an ad hoc meeting delegation of the EP to Minsk in early 2010, but it was declined by the Belarusian authorities (interview F).

[iv] Although the Prague Declaration is rather ambiguous on who should be part of the parliamentary assembly, in practice there is no role for national parliamentarians from the EU. It is true that some members of the national Parliaments of EU countries have been invited and were allowed to take the floor for introductory/welcoming speeches, but this has not translated in a substantial role for these parliamentarians (interview F).

[v] The former chair, Kristian Vigenin, was appointed foreign minister of Bulgaria and thus had to give up his seat in the EP.

[vi] Safarov, an Azerbaijani military, killed an Armenian officer by axe during a NATO training in Budapest, and was later on extradited by Hungary to Azerbaijan, where the President pardoned and glorified him.

[vii] see e.g. the tweet of the Dutch MEP Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy: twitter.com/search?q=%23Euronest.