INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF EUROPARTIES: DESIGNING A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

By

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Abstract

The thesis looks at Europarty development and develops a framework for their comparison, which is based on the level of institutionalization and organizational setup. It explores key features of institutional organization of Europarties, particularly through their functional and organizational evolution. It combines IR and CP approaches and on the basis of party statutes content analysis and interviews with Europarties' elites (i) develops indicators to measure institutionalization, and (ii) presents ideal organizational framework for Europarties comparison. The thesis shows that Europarties share the same internal organs as a result of the institutional environment in which they evolved. It also shows increased levels of institutionalization of the two biggest Europarties, EPP and PES, and organizational convergence.

The first part of the thesis provides a detailed descriptive analysis of institutionalization and party organization at European level. The analytical section is divided into two parts. The first part addresses Europarties primary documents, whilst the second part focuses on two cases EPP and PES, where the newly developed comparative framework is tested.

i

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Table of Contents

CEU eTD Collection

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

AISBL – Non-profit international organization

ALDE – Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

CD – Christian-Democracy

CP – Comparative politics

EC – European Community

EEC – European Economic Community

EGP – European Green Party

EP – European Parliament

EPF – European Political Foundation

EPG – European Parliamentary Group

EPP – European People's Party

EU – European Union

IGC – Intergovernmental conference

IR – International relations

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

PES – Party of European Socialists

PPEL – Political party at European level

QMV – Qualified majority voting

S&D – Socialists and Democrats

TEU – Treaty of the European Union

Introduction

In 2001 as national governments were preparing at the intergovernmental conference (IGC) to agree a legal framework for European political parties, Wilfried Martens, the president of the European People's Party (EPP), proudly stated "[The Nice Treaty] includes a new agreement on a statute for European political parties…It will mean that the EPP can function as it was intended to when it was founded 25 years ago as a genuine transnational party" (as cited in, Johansson and Raunio 2005, 526). Almost two decades later the debate on Europarties continues to represent an under-researched area of study with many contributions either trying to equate the European polity with national polity or completely dismissing any party politics at European level.

Europarties received their first recognition with the Maastricht Treaty and slowly evolved with every subsequent treaty amendment and new regulations. The adoption of the final version of the Lisbon Treaty equipped the European Union (EU), in Barroso's words, "with the right mechanisms to be more efficient, democratic and coherent" (cited in, Bressanelli 2014, 2). It has also created the possibility for nominating lead candidates of political parties for the next EP elections. It appears that party politics has begun to be organized and contested at European level.

Despite the lack of genuine transnational political parties, it should not be forgotten that the EU has always been influenced by political parties. European Commissioners, Council of Ministers and members of the European Council are all members and are recruited from political parties from the member states. All (leading) political parties in the national arena are involved into the (day-to-day) management of the EU (Hix and Lord 1997, 1). Nevertheless, as the EU was becoming more integrated (deepened and widened), there was an increased necessity for greater cooperation and coordination of political party activities across national

borders. As a response to this, the first European party federations and confederations were formed in party families with similar ideologies (which were already organized transnationally).

Politicization of the EU did not follow after the emergence of Europarties, which called into question whether we need European parties at all (Hanley 2008, 1; Morlok 2002)? The commitment of Europarties leaders in the 1990s and 2000s with their actions was a sign of a positive response to this question, as series of reforms were pushed to the European agenda as a means for recognition of party politics within the EU. The development of party politics in the EU was considered to be necessary ingredient for democratization (Johansson and Raunio 2005; Johansson and Zervakis 2002), just as it has been considered more than half a century ago for national political parties (Schattschneider 1942). Despite this ambition there are substantial differences between the two levels, national and European. In classical party democracy, political parties contest elections that are instruments of democracy and connect policy preferences of electors with political production. Within the EU this is not case, because the linkage is simply not present (Sozzi 2013, 10–14).

Therefore, it is necessary to understand Europarties as parties that are different from national parties and that developed functions from their institutional environment, which correspond to their needs. As parties evolved, their structure has also started to develop (Timuş and Lightfoot 2014). Europarties continue to be considered primarily as umbrella organizations that offer their members a forum to discuss issues of their concern and propose guidance for future directions.

Despite the different ideological backgrounds and political traditions, it seems to be puzzling why Europarties are converging organizationally and are becoming more institutionalized? The present thesis will offer insight into the internal organization of Europarties. The starting point

2

of the thesis is to analyze whether some, if any, of the functions or criteria we use to describe or compare parties at national level are applicable to Europarties. Therefore, the basic guiding question of the thesis is: *How are Europarties internally organized?* This rather simple question seems more difficult to answer than it appears because of the special nature of party federations, which from the very start makes it impossible to apply models already developed for national party organizations. The main hypotheses of the thesis are that (i) European Party Federations (Europarties) that emerged since the 1970s have followed a path-dependent road; (ii) due to environmental constraints they have adopted structures and functions different from the national, which allows them to operate at European level, (iii) due to the information and knowledge expertise, Europarties are emerging as agenda-setters during intergovernmental conferences (IGC) which enables them successful coordination and communication between national parties and creation of long-term party programs (Hix 1995; Johansson and Raunio 2005). They have managed to adapt to the situation they were presented with and to develop structure and functions in accordance with it.

The main focus of the thesis is on the organizational aspect of Europarties, functions and structures, and the goal is to draw a comprehensive framework of Europarties which can be used to compare them. The framework is analyzed through the perspective of the two biggest Europarties, EPP and PES. It consists of two parts. The first part looks into the level of institutionalization – autonomy and systemness of Europarties. The second part focuses on the organizational structure by focusing on some important functions: inclusion, education and coordination through the IGC and European Political Foundations (EPF).

The outline of the thesis is as follows. In the first part of the thesis, I will present the theoretical framework, the research design and methodology and the historical development of Europarties as a background context for the later analysis. The second part of the thesis is divided into two

sections. In the first section, which makes up the descriptive part of the thesis, the focus is on analysis of the literature on institutionalization and party functions, both at national and European level. The second section focuses on analysis of primary documents of the four Europarties – EPP, PES, ALDE and EGP. It looks into three aspects: party organs, other organizations affiliated with the Europarties and increased institutionalization of the Europarties. Finally, in the last part of the thesis I present a new framework of Europarties and compare EPP and PES on the grounds of institutionalization and their organizational framework. The study is based on detailed analysis of party statutes, internal regulations of Europarties, financial reports and interviews conducted with officials from the aforementioned Europarties.

1. Theoretical Framework

Some skeptical voices are questioning whether we need political parties at European level at all and whether they are able to perform their classical functions of vote-seeking, policy-seeking and office seeking, i.e. the classical functions political parties have at national level (Bardi and Calossi 2009, 151). This coincides with the growing skepticism towards national parties as well, particularly in regard to their capacity to fulfill some of their basic functions such as citizens' representation (Mair 2014). The situation is further complicated when one considers that the EU has no (or underdeveloped at best) party system and the parties at European level are different from national ones. Therefore, when studying parties at the EU level one should take into consideration the environment in which these Europarties have developed and how they have evolved.

The study of Europarties is closely linked to the theoretical study of the EU and Europarties' activities follow the institutional development of the European integration process (Ladrech 2006, 492; Johansson and Raunio 2005, 526). The first contributions to the study of political parties at European level came from the international relations (IR) literature. Ernst Haas, a well-known IR scholar, was among the first to attempt to define parties at European level. For Haas (2006, 105), "the competing activities of permanently organized interest groups and of political parties are singled out as the significant carriers of values and ideologies whose opposition, identity or convergence determines the success or failure of a transnational ideology." Today there are generally two approaches applied to the study of Europarties – that of IR and comparative politics (CP). For the former, Europarties are regarded as meeting places of national parties, while for the latter Europarties are seen as more coherent organizations (Bressanelli 2014; Hanley 2008; Hix 1995).

Until the 1990s the study of Europarties was dominated by the IR approach. The first IR scholars who paid attention to party politics in the aftermath of the first direct EP elections were the Pridhams (Pridham and Pridham 1981) and Niedermayer (1983). Throughout the years different strands dominated within IR. The first strand comprised Haas's neofunctionlist/liberal framework. As part of this framework, Haas analyzed whether transnational parties were pro- or anti-European. However, his framework did not cover the socio-economic interests and it became more exposed as the EU started to apply more positive integration issues. His approach did not provide sufficient explanations regarding two aspects: (i) it was not able to explain further integration of "political parties," and (ii) it did not provide clear assumptions about the shift of loyalty from national to European level as the integration intensified from which a theoretical framework could be derived. The second strand of the IR approach is the realist/intergovernmentalist framework. Within this approach states represent unitary actors, whereas the EU is seen as another international organization and hence cannot be independent from the national authorities. Non-state actors such as Europarties are excluded from this framework, because political parties can only obtain legitimacy within the confines of the existing national institutions (Hix 1995, 24).

According to the IR approach, Europarties only exist as part of the European Treaties, while their congresses and programs are nothing more than empty gestures (Magnette 2004, 72). In other words, party politics at the European level cannot develop. Bearing in mind that the European Union is an international organization or regime, its existence can be explained as bargaining and negotiation between member states (Bardi 2002, 294; Moravcsik 1993). Both strands regard politics as among nations and not within a political system such as the EU (Hix 1995, 22). When we apply the IR approach, the study of Europarties (and elections) will be considered as a contest between national parties and on national issues (Interview with Representative from the EGP 2019). With such approaches it is practically impossible to

6

conceptualize "political parties at the European level" and consequently their organizational structure and functions. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis it is necessary to look at other approaches.

The second approach to the study of Europarties is the CP approach. As the European Community/EU became more integrated, so has the theoretical framework moved from IR to CP focus. The starting point for the CP was moving from "Europe des patries" to "Europe des parties". As such, the CP approach sees the EU as a developing political system (Hecke 2010, 402). Therefore, this approach claims that it is necessary to abandon the understanding that the EU is an international organization and accept the EU as a nascent political system with Europarties as central actors. Moreover, politics in the EU is similar to how politics is conducted in any other "polity" or "system of governance" (Hix and Lord 1997, 203).

Initially, comparative theories have been used to analyze the relationship between national parliaments and the EU parliament and thereafter the shaping of the party system in the EU (Attina 1990). Apart from the study of parliamentary groups, the most important development for the comparativists was probably the codification of the party article, Art.138a from Maastricht Treaty, and the inclusion of the European party federations in the cross-national study of political parties (Bardi 1994). The codification of the party article paved the way for the adoption of party statutes, while party programs and manifestos became more central to the analysis. Much focus for the CP scholars was placed on discussing aspects such as legal status, party structure or party financing (Hecke 2010, 403). Consequently, CP scholars take into account the institutional and political environment of the EU and the theories and concepts developed within CP offer more insightful analysis (Hix 1993, 38).

Taking into consideration the frameworks of the two approaches and their advantages and limitations, the thesis integrates both approaches and is located between the two. The reasons

for this decision are the following. On the one hand, IGC serve as meeting places for national parties before European Council meetings, albeit places which are also influenced by the Europarties. In this regard the IR approach offers a better understanding, because the IGC are meetings of national leaders – intergovernmental, but at the same time their agenda is influenced (to a certain extent) by the Europarty. On the other hand, by integrating CP with new institutionalism and tracing their evolutionary development, we can study Europarties as unitary actors in terms of type and structure of party membership, party cohesion, staff size, powers and competences of organs and party finances (R. S. Katz and Mair 1994). The CP approach in this regard allows us to focus on comparative documents such as statutes and internal regulations. Parties within the CP context can be understood only within the institutional environment that gives them meaning. Both the genesis of the party and the environment in which it was created have huge effect on the future development of the party system and party structure. As such, the newly created parties are institutionally constrained by the environment and their subsequent development depends on the initial structure (Johansson and Raunio 2005).

2. Methodology and Research Design

The focus of the thesis will be on the Europarties that have evolved in the past few decades and have become more cohesive. The academic interest and research on Europarties can be grouped in four strands: (i) Europarties' organizational evolution; (ii) internal organization; (iii) influence over EU policy-making; and (iv) role in transnational party building in new democracies (Bressanelli 2014; Hanley 2008; Kaeding and Switek 2016). The thesis' focus is on the first two strands.

The thesis has two sections: descriptive and analytical. In the descriptive section, I will present a detailed analysis of the literature on party organization and institutionalization, first at national level and then at European level. Particular focus in this section will be placed on the organization and institutionalization of Europarties. The analytical section consists of two parts. In the first part I will carry out content analysis of party statutes of four Europarties. In the second part, I will use these findings to develop a new organizational framework for Europarties. The analysis in this section will also be based on the information and data obtained from the interviews conducted with officials from three Europarties. In a last step, the framework will be applied to two case studies: EPP and PES.

2.1. Descriptive Section

The descriptive part of the thesis will look into the concept of Europarties and will investigate their position within European families and how they are related with the party factions in the European Parliament. It will also analyze their position vis-à-vis national political parties. At this point the aim will be to identify the concepts in the literature that deal with organization and institutionalization at national level and then move beyond that and focus on the transnational level. The scope of the thesis is to limit the research to Europarties, i.e. parties at transnational level, and not focus on European Parliamentary Groups (EPGs). It is necessary

to distinguish between the two due to the changing composition of the latter. Europarties are the extra-parliamentary groups that emerged in the 1970s before the first direct EP elections and operate separately from the EP groups. In the vocabulary of national political parties, the Europarties correspond to the central office of party organization. They bring together national parties at European level for networking, communication and coordination of activities. Von dem Berge defines them as "federal associations composed of national or regional parties from several countries with common goals…that oblige themselves to permanent cooperation on the basis of common statute…and implementation of a joint program" (2015, 51, author's translation).

Having said that, the thesis will first analyze the organizational evolution of Europarties (transnational federations) in order to provide context and present the institutional environment in which they have emerged, developed and evolved to their today's position. Furthermore, it will inspect institutionalization of political parties in terms of the structure they have developed and functions they perform at the European level.

2.2. Analysis of Documents and Content

The analytical section will first focus on the content analysis of party statutes and documents. For this purpose, I have collected data from the party statutes and other party documents, manifestos and declarations of the four largest Europarties considered in the literature as the most institutionalized: EPP, PES, ALDE and EGP. The following party statutes were used in the analysis ("ALDE Statutes as Adopted by the ALDE Party Congress in Warsaw on 1-3 December 2016" n.d.; "EGP Statutes as Adopted in Berlin Council November 2018" n.d.; "EPP Statutes Adopted by the Helsinki Congress on 7 November 2018" n.d.; "PES Statutes Adopted by the 11th PES Congress on 7th December 2018" n.d.):

- Statutes of the European People's Party – approved by the EPP Congress on 7 November 2018 in Helsinki;

- Statutes of the European Green Party – adopted by the EGP Council on 12 November 2011 in Paris and last amended by the EGP Council on 31 March 2017 in Liverpool;

- Statutes of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party – adopted by the ALDE Party Congress on 1-3 December 2016 in Warsaw;

- Statutes of the Party of European Socialists – adopted by the 11th PES Congress on 7 December 2018.

The analysis of the statutes serves to identify the "official story" of the Europarties concerning their organizational structure and functions they perform. The information I have extracted from the statutes relates to the type of membership, size and organs of the Europarty, their powers and competences, decision-making, voting regulations and party finances.

The statutes of some parties did not entail their internal regulation, which in some instances cover powers and competences of some the organs. Therefore, for these instances I took into account the internal regulations of Europarties, where such documents were separate from the statutes. This was the case with two Europarties, EPP and ALDE ("Internal Regulations of ALDE Adopted on 2 December 2016" n.d.; "Internal Regulations of the European People's Party" n.d.).

- Internal Regulations of the EPP approved by the EPP Political Assembly on 6-7 September 2018 in Brussels; and

- Internal Regulations of the ALDE as modified at the Party Council on 2 December 2016 in Warsaw.

11

Finally, for the analysis of the funding sources and the distribution of finances from the European budget I have used the financial statements of the Europarties from the last available fiscal year ("European Green Party Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "European People's Party Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "Party of European Socialists Audit Report for 2017" n.d.):

- Independent auditor's report to the European People's Party AISBL for the year ended 31 December 2017,

- Independent auditor's report to the general meeting of the Party of European Socialists AISBL for the year ended 31 December 2017,

- Independent auditor's report to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe AISBL for the year ended 31 December 2017,

- Annual Report 2017 of the European Green Party.

2.3. Case Studies

On the grounds of the aforementioned statutes and content analysis, the thesis will draw a comparative framework for Europarties. It will build on several previous attempts and present a more comprehensive organizational structure that takes into account the most recent organizational developments, such as the formalization of the IGCs and the affiliation of other organizations, particularly the EPFs. After the presentation of the framework, the second part of the analytical section will delve into two case studies: EPP and PES. The rationale behind selecting these two Europarties is two-fold: (i) they are the biggest and most influential parties at EU level, and (ii) represent the only two parties that have had most seats in the EP and exert the most influence on the policy-making agenda.

2.4. Interview Data

In addition to content analysis of Europarty statutes and other organizational documents, I have conducted interviews with party elites. The reason behind it is that interviews can provide grounds to contrast the official story that comes from the written documents (statutes, internal regulations and so on) with the experiences of the high-ranking officials from the Europarties. I have managed to conduct interviews with five officials from the four abovementioned Europarties, namely with

- a high-ranking official from the European People's Party (who maintained to stay anonymous) responsible for coordination and communication with national parties and the external strategy of the party.

- Mar Garcia Sanz, Secretary General of the European Green Party

- Andrew Burgess, Political Adviser with the Alliance of Liberal and Democrats in Europe, responsible for the management of the party manifesto and contact person on membership related issues.

- Constantin Kourkoulas, Head of EU Policy Unit at the Party of European Socialists.

- Lorenza Tiberi, Adviser - President's Office at the Party of European Socialists.

In addition to the five interviews, I have also contacted other officials from the four Europarties, however, I have not received any response so far.

3. The Origins and Development of Europarties

The idea of transnational party organization is not new and unique for the EU and predates the federations and confederations in the EEC during the 1970s. Political parties recognized that their work includes transnational dimension and sought after the benefits of having transnational cooperation. Similar party families joined at transnational level to create federations, confederations or other forms of groupings and associations in order to contest elections and try to obtain majority in the EP.

First such efforts date back to the XIX century with the First International and later the Socialist International. Since then other party families have also mimicked the process and organized themselves along ideological lines, such as for instance the Christian Democratic Union after the Second World War (Hanley 2008, 15). The creation of the European Economic Community has provided political parties with new avenues to become active. Within the EEC's Assembly there were party groupings, however, there was no motivation to move beyond and establish permanent extra-parliamentary office to, at least, coordinate activities (Bukow and Höhne 2013, 822–24). This was the case until the 1970s amendments to the Treaty of Rome which were to include direct elections for the European Parliament. For the first direct elections for the EP in 1979, national political parties saw this as a call to start to organize and cooperate at European level in order to achieve their common aims by creating transnational party cooperation (Delwit, Kulahci, and Van de Walle 2004, 5–6; Gagatek 2010, 12–15; Hix and Lord 1997, 13–15; Hloušek and Kopeček 2010, 215–22). The term transnational party cooperation within the European Community applied to

> "the institutionalized coordination and promotion of common policy positions and other forms of European activity by political parties of the same ideological tendency from different member countries within the broad framework of the European Community" (Pridham and Pridham 1981, 2).

Europarties were initially created as small secretariats, closely linked with EP groups and even sharing office and staff with the EPGs. The dominant political families at the time across the member states were the first to organize – Socialists, Christian Democrats and Liberals. However, the ambition between the new "parties" varied across families (Hix 1996, 308–12). On the one hand, the most pro-integrationist party, the European People's Party, adopted the spirit of the Community and used the term "party" in its name, while parties from the other two, Confederation of the Socialist Parties in the European Community and the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties in the European Community, oscillated more on the integration dimension (see Hix and others, with lower cohesion or agreement regarding integration) and were more modest in their naming.

Many political scientists jumped at this opportunity and proclaimed it to be a new era of genuine Europarty democracy (Gagatek 2010, 14). It was to be "Europe des partis" (Marquand 1978), marking the re-orientation of political parties from the national arena to the European, or the politicization of the EC/genuine transnational political party competition (which did not materialize). The politicization was to be incremental and long-term, as touched upon a key national interest, governance and elections.

Figure: Party families and road to institutionalization

	1864	1889–1914	1919–1939	1945–1958	1958…	1970s	1990s/2000
Socialists	1st Inter	2nd Inter	LSI-SI				
				Soc group in ECSC	Soc group in EP	CESP	PES
Christian Democrats			SIPDIC	NEI-EUCD	CDI		
				CD group in ECSC	CD group in EP	EPP	
Liberals			Entente	Liberal International			
				Lib group in ECSC	Lib group in EP	ELDR	
Communists			Third International (Comintern)	Cominform	EP groups	GUE/NGL	PEL
Greens						EGC	EFGP, EGP

Source: (Hanley 2008, 16).

15

Nevertheless, the expectations did not unfold as envisaged, because of the sluggish or almost non-existent progress in the 1980s. As the idea of genuine transnational party competition did not materialize, the new party structures developed new roles and are now regarded as vehicle of coordination and communication between political parties and forum for transnational cooperation of national parties (Bressanelli 2014, 4; Bukow and Höhne 2013; Gagatek 2010; Hix and Lord 1997; Klein 2013).

The first concrete step towards greater party institutionalization took place in Maastricht in 1992 after the decision of the IGC organized by the leaders of the three most developed parties at the time - PES, EPP and ALDE (Gagatek 2010, 26–27). Maastricht's reference to "parties at the European level" (Art. 138a) opened the stage for development of certain political party function for Europarties. The "party article – Art. 138a" of the Maastricht Treaty, which officially recognized the integrative status of these entities in terms of forming European awareness and expressing the political will of citizens of the EU, further developed two functions of the Europarties: integrative and representative function (Bressanelli 2014, 4).

Additionally, since the Treaty of Maastricht, the idea of better coordination and cooperation was in its embryonic state and commenced to evolve. The impact of the institutional factors during this process is evident, because despite the individual preferences for more concrete and precise definition of Europarties, the entire process (constrained by the endogenous institutional setup) remained mostly declarative (Johansson and Zervakis 2002, 13–14). Notwithstanding the incomplete process, the importance to develop (genuine) party politics in the 1990s continued to be pursued, through EP's Institutional Affairs Committee and the preparation of the Tsatsos Report (Jansen 1998).

The Treaty of Nice equipped Europarties with the tools of financing, on the grounds of which was created a Council Regulation for party financing with eligibility criteria that guarantee

respect of democratic principles. The adoption of the Nice Treaty allowed Europarties to be addressed as "Political parties at the European level are important as a factor of integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union." (Art. 191 TEU "Treaty of Nice Amending the Treaty on European Union 2001/C 80/01" 2001).

As a result of the Treaty two forms of transnational party groupings have been established: (i) alliance of political parties requires cooperation of at least two political parties; and (ii) political parties are to be considered only those which meet a list of criteria: (ii.i) they have legal personality in the member state where it is located; (ii.ii) they have elected MEPs, members in the national parliament or regional parliaments in at least ¼ of member states or received at least 3% of votes in ¼ of member states; (ii.iii) their party programs must respect the fundamental principles of democracy; and (ii.iv) they must participate or expressed willingness to participate in EP elections (Lightfoot 2006, 307; Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 2004). Following this a Europarty, pursuant to Art. 191, will be defined as an "association of citizens which pursues political objectives and which is either recognized by, or established in accordance with, the legal order of at least one member state" ("Treaty of Nice Amending the Treaty on European Union 2001/C 80/01" 2001).

Nice has paved the road for two important European Regulation that will further develop the functions of Europarties, but most importantly provided legal basis for formation of party entities at European level – PPEL or Europarties. The first of the series of two regulations adopted in 2000s, Regulation 2004/2003, provided Europarties with legal status and provided the basis for direct subsidies/financing from the European Budget. The other regulation, Reg. 1524/2007, further specified party financing, structure and enabled the creation of political foundations at European level connected to one of the Europarties.

The legal status provides Europarties with political platform to strengthen their connection with European citizenry, which is dissociated from the European public sphere (Chryssochoou 2011, 6). Similarly, the amendments of the two Treaties, Maastricht and Nice, gave Europarties the opportunity (to a certain and for some authors insignificant) to exert their influence on the European decision-making process (Delwit, Kulahci, and Van de Walle 2004, 6). This was later incorporated in the next treaty document, the Lisbon Treaty (Treaty of Lisbon amending the TEU and the TFEU 2007), with the provisions of democratic principles and representation. In addition, the interpretation of Art. 17(6) has led to (embryonic) development of representation function at European level. The article has linked the results from the EP elections with the selection procedure for the next Commission President. This has also paved the road for the selection of the Commission President from the "winning transnational party" and possible introduction of transnational party lists (Day 2005, 59–60; Piris and Merkel 2011, 137).

The second notion is yet to be implemented as there is severe opposition among some political entities. On the other hand, the interviews have shown that some Europarties, ALDE and EGP, see this as the ultimate obstacle for the development of a party system at European level and along with it genuine European elections (Interview with Representative from ALDE 2019; Interview with Representative from the European Greens Party - EGP 2019).

Briefly summarized the road that the party formation at European level took was the following: from confederations to federations and finally to "genuine" political parties (Johansson and Raunio 2005, 516).

Figure 1:Timeline of Europarty formation

1970s/1980s	1990s	After 2004
Confederation	Federation	Party
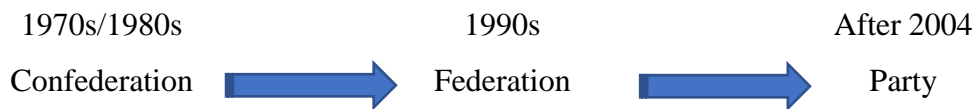
Source: author's compilation based on the literature research.

Despite the increased presence in European Treaties, Europarties in the 2000s did not receive the same attention as in the 1990s (see next section for a detailed review of the state-of-the-art). For Kühlaci and Lightfoot (2014) this was due to the slow development of the Europarties, on the one hand, and their inability (yet) to play regularly their role in shaping European policies.

Table 1: Important changes through each decade of party development

1970s	Initial formation of the transnational federations and confederations; mobilization for the first EP elections
1980s	At the end of the decade, coordination between leaders of Socialists – People's Party – Liberal for the inclusion of the party article
1990s	Maastricht Treaty and the "Party Article" – first recognition of party politics at the EU level
2000s	Nice Treaty – set the legal basis for the two Regulations Regulation 2004/2003 – legal basis for formation of political party at European level and party financing Regulation 1524/2007 – legal basis for creation of transnational political foundations linked with a related Europarty Lisbon Treaty – linking the process of EP elections and selection of the European Commission President
2010s	Regulation 1141/2014 – further regulation concerning the funding of Europarties and the political foundations

Source: Author's compilation based on literature research.

This (successful) long road of institutionalization of Europarties followed a top-down approach, by first advocating for the drafting of legal framework or legal recognition and greater financial resources and then developing their organizational structure, as it was the case with the EGP, for instance. Furthermore, the legal framework of Europarties resembles to a great extent to that of national parties. Both, Europarties and national parties are recognized in

the Constitution (European Treaties) and further regulated and defined in specific laws (Gagatek 2010, 28–29).

The outcome from the 2000s reforms was more independent Europarties with offices outside the European Parliament, increase of permanently employed staff for the day-to-day activities, closer cooperation with the EPF, pursuance of QMV and simple majority procedures within the party on adopting party policies, although consensus is still the preferred model (Interview with Representative from the EGP 2019), greater institutionalization of some parties, such as the Greens, and most importantly, moving from status of federation to "genuine" political party. The most recent development has been the adoption of the lead candidate procedure, where Europarties played instrumental role in the process. This was accompanied by suggestions to include Europarties logos in the national campaigns and synchronize national programs with the goals of the Europarty manifesto (Lightfoot 2006, 310).

All four major Europarties have experienced organization changes (such as internal decision-making) and modifications concerning their relations with EP groups (Ladrech 2006, 495). The political environment in which Europarties exist today has also changed fundamentally (Johansson and Raunio 2005, 516). Bearing in mind the evolutionary development of Europarties, the next several sections will focus on the process of institutionalization of Europarties and development of their organizational structure and functions.

4. Framework of Analysis

Europarties, like national parties, are not static. They have not developed at a point in time, but rather parties evolve, react to external pressure and change their environment of functioning and even their structure (Gagatek 2010, 15). The starting point for reviewing the literature on institutionalization is the national setting, as it is there where parties have developed. Once we comprehend the national setting as Mair suggests (2005, 16), we can then climb up the Sartorian ladder of abstraction and accept a definition of political parties that can be applied to the new setting, i.e. the EU and understand the European system as an "exceptional polity" (see also Bressanelli 2014, 35). In this process it is necessary to move from narrower to broader definition of political parties (Janda 1993, 165–66), which will have less properties and entail Europarties as nascent parties. In moving from national to European level, some inspiration for the thesis was drawn from the seminal work of Oskar Niedermayer "Europäischen Parteien?" particularly the sections on institutionalization. His three-stage interaction process of contact, cooperation and integration serves as measuring rod for the level of Europarty integration (Niedermayer 1983, 52–55).

The section will be divided into two parts. The first part will deal with party institutionalization at national level and European level, while the second will look into the functions and roles of national parties and Europarties.

4.1. Institutionalization

4.1.1. Institutionalization of National Parties

The study of comparative party politics has started to develop in the 1960s with the publication of a series of seminal works on party politics in national settings. These first works defined political parties, their organizational structure, how and where they develop and evolve and

what some of their main functions are (Duverger 1963; LaPalombara and Weiner 2015; Sartori 2005). Much of the focus in this period has been on the formation of political parties and party systems, but little focus has been placed on the way these organizations solidify, i.e. their institutionalization. Having regard that institutionalization is connected with the organizational evolution of parties, let us briefly focus on how it has been conceptualized by different scholars.

Samuel Huntington's (2006, 12–24) understanding of political institutionalization can be described by four criteria: adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence with particular emphasis on organization and coherence. Nevertheless, his focus is not on political parties per se, but rather on the political system as a whole (Huntington 2006, 12). A widely used conceptualization of institutionalization is that of Panebianco which consists of two concepts: genetic model, which gives the genetic characteristics of an organization, and institutionalization or the way an organization "solidifies" (1988, 49–68). Institutionalization for him is measured on two scales: organization's degree of autonomy (with regard to the environment) and the degree of systemness (interdependence). Subsequently, high degree of autonomy and systemness lead to strong institutionalization (Panebianco 1988, 53–57).

Finally, Randall and Svåsand understand institutionalization as a process of integrated patterns of behavior and attitudes. They propose four dimensions of institutionalization, namely internal/external and structural/attitudinal (Randall and Svåsand 2002, 12–13). The internal dimension refers for the developments within a party, whilst the external is shaped by the relationship with its environment. The structural dimension refers to the scope, density and regularity of interactions, whilst the attitudinal relates to supporters and members' level of identification and commitment to the party.

Taking into consideration the nascent character of the Europarties and their complex multilevel structure and interdependence on the EPGs, for the purposes of the thesis Panebianco's approach of institutionalization will be adopted.

4.1.2. Institutionalization of Europarties

In order to have legible and clear text, Sartori (2009) delineates that it is necessary to have our concepts clearly defined, respect their boundaries and avoid stretching, i.e. it is necessary for us to be able to distinguish what is A from what is not-A. The two types of concepts one has to look at are theoretical and empirical concepts. However, what connects them and makes them meaningful is the theory behind it (Mair 2008, 179). For the purpose of the present study, in a first step it is essential to define what Europarties are and what separates them from other parties, such as national parties or even EP groups. The matter gets more complicated if we try to borrow concepts from national level and apply them to European level. Therefore, it is necessary to apply the right scale on the ladder of abstraction. The concepts should not have too many properties, which will reduce their applicability, but also it should not be too general to avoid inclusion of entities that are not part of the analysis (Goertz 2006; Mair 2008, 186–92). Having regard that most concepts related to party systems and political parties are developed in the context of the West European national party systems, it is necessary to carefully approach and reconceptualize the territorial scope of application. In order to adequately treat the use of the concept of transnational parties, it will be necessary to map the conceptual basis of a party outside national boundaries (Hanley 2008, 8).

The term "political parties" ascribed to party formations at the European level has a different meaning from the one that is used in the national context (Gagatek 2010, 15). This is derived from the research conducted on the functions performed by Europarties, their organizational structure and most importantly the level of institutionalization. Although some authors

(Delsoldato 2002; Delwit, Kulahci, and Van de Walle 2004; Hix and Lord 1997) also use this concept for both the European Parliamentary Groups and the transnational federations. For the context of this master thesis Europarties will be used to designate party federations or extra-parliamentary party federations at the European level. They are entities that emerged before the first direct elections in the 1970s and were formally recognized as actors with the Maastricht Treaty. In the literature, Europarty is considered as a synonym for the transnational party federations or the "PPEL" (Sozzi 2013, 9). However, Hecke (2010, 397) emphasizes that it is better to use the term "Europarties" instead of transnational parties as it demarcates the territorial scope on which they operate and differentiates from the classical understanding ascribed to national political parties.

The most appropriate approach to analyze the conceptualization of Europarties is through the process of institutionalization. The institutionalization of the party federations within the EU system is rather weak and emerging (Mair and Thomassen 2010). Europarties do not have members (for most parties, membership is only indirect via national parties) and issues such as resources, identifiable leader and no clear party system at the EU were identified as indicators for weak institutionalization. Taking into consideration the embryonic character of Europarties, they will be analyzed through the lenses of Panebianco's framework of systemness and autonomy (Panebianco 1988, 49–68). Although this framework is applied to national party institutionalization factors such as party genesis, initial development or subsequent evolution (bounded by the genesis and tied to the development of the entity within which it emerged), it can also be implemented within transnational context (Day 2005, 61).

This institutionalization process of Europarties looks at autonomy and systemness (Panebianco 1988; Sozzi 2013). Europarty autonomy reflects more freedom from national parties at organizational, financial and decision-making level. This is exemplified through the

application of majority voting rules and whether decisions are binding for all members. The systemness aspect in European context relates to the integration among various components of Europarties. That is to say the Europarty is no longer only a tool, but it becomes valuable in itself (Sozzi 2013, 14). Furthermore, Sozzi (Sozzi 2013, 24–26) proposes to look at systemness as a proportion of de jure attendance of EPG representatives to Europarties' bodies or how many national member parties from one Europarty are also represented in the same party grouping in the European Parliament.

This leads to the question: should we look at Europarties merely as proto-parties (in embryonic stage of development) but on the road of becoming functioning supranational entities, or should we adopt a more skeptical approach and regard them only as umbrella organizations for national parties without future possibility to evolve (Day 2005, 60)? Europarties are obviously different from national parties as prescribed by Duverger and the other classical theorists, nevertheless, the "constitutional" changes since the Maastricht Treaty and particularly the "constitutionalization" with the party article and party statutes is bound to change the way Europarties are organized and function (Lightfoot 2006). Taking into consideration the evolving structure and continuous development (more on this in the next section), the thesis will adopt the first approach – look at Europarties as developmental.

4.2. Development of Functions

4.2.1. National Parties

Before proceeding with the overview of structures and functions of Europarties, let us just briefly focus on national political parties. In the national arena, political parties developed as indispensable institution for any democratic society. They represent the channels through which government and politics are related (Hague, Harrop, and McCormick 2016, 251). This thesis will not focus on the origins and types of political parties, which are explained at great

length in the works of Duverger, Sartori, Epstein and Ware (Duverger 1963; Epstein 1967; Sartori 2005; Ware 2009). Rather, its focus will be on the functions that emerged as a result of the institutional environment, organizational structure and party system in which they operate. Some functions associated with modern political parties are critical for government formation and voter engagement.

Figure 2: Party functions of national political parties

Nation state					Interest Groups Media
Government formation / organization of parliament	Guidance/social integration	Interest Aggregation/issue structuring	Mobilization	(elite) Recruitment and candidate nomination	
Society/citizens					

Based on the analysis of (Diamond and Günther 2001, 7–10; Hague, Harrop, and McCormick 2016, 252–53; Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 100–112).

Political parties are the bridge between the society/citizens and the nation state. They are constantly influenced by citizens and also by other organized interest groups, the media and the party system in which they operate. At national level political parties operate at meso-level, between the boundaries of citizens and nation state (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 100–102). Although there is disagreement among scholars on the exact number of party functions, many agree that there are two minimal functions that political parties continue to exhibit: contesting elections (Sartori 2005) and representation of citizens' interests (Mair 2009).

In recent decades, party politics has been experiencing great challenges to sustain the mass politics models from the 1950s and 1960s. Citizens are disengaged from the electoral arena, while the political elites are withdrawing from electoral politics (Piccio 2016). Mair's (2014) *Hollowing the Void* echoes these exact words. The separation of parties from citizens also meant alterations in the political functions associated with parties, because political parties are no longer capable of sustaining democracy as it is now. Part of the problem is the failing of

contemporary political parties and national party systems (Mair 2014, 27–28). The stresses of national party system are also transferred at the European level, where Schmitter claims it is not the European system that it is under pressure, but rather it only responds to the crisis of the national party system (Schmitter 2019).

4.2.2. Europarties

Europarties exist within the evolving structure of the EU's political and legal environment and are shaped on a daily basis by the complex network of interactions of varieties of agents at transnational, national, regional and local level (Day 2005, 60). "Europarties can be defined as an institutionalized form of party organization at the EU level that has seen a partial transfer of sovereignty from national member parties" (Lightfoot 2006, 304). The initial context behind their creation was to channel the interests of national parties at the EU level, thus creating a multilevel party system (Bartolini 2007, 327). In this multi-level system, parties still need to fulfill some roles if the EU is going to continue to democratize (Lightfoot 2006, 303). Hix (1993, 39–40) defines the EU system as one which contains elements both of federalism and consensus democracy and goes on to propose analysis of the system in light of it. For him one of the major obstacles in the development of strongly institutionalized political parties at central level in a federal system is the existence of strong decentralized parties, which in the case of the EU are the national parties.

Political party activity in the EU is represented in three interconnected dimensions: national dimension (nominates candidates for EP elections, contributes to Europarty budget and exerts influence over the national delegation in the EP); EPGs (organized in parliamentary groups and selects office such as chairs); and the transnational dimension (that is, the transnational federations or the Europarties) (Ladrech 2006, 492). From the three dimensions, the transnational or the Europarty has the weakest institutional development. Regardless of this,

one of the main functions of Europarties, which has been constantly evolving and developing

from the 1990s, was to *link national parties* (from the same party family) and deepen their

cooperation and coordination between the EU and the national level, or what the interviewee

from ALDE described (Interview with Representative from ALDE 2019)as bridging the

relationship between national parties and EP groups (Ladrech 2006, 492).

The announcement of direct EP elections stimulated the newly formed transnational

federations and confederations to meet and create common manifestos. With that, these party

federations seem to have started developing functions on their own, one of which was

coordination (Bressanelli 2014, 4). Coordination is an important function of Europarties and

this is particularly pronounced during the IGC (Hix 1993, 40–42; Mittag and Steuwer 2010,

115–16). The Europarties have slowly grown to it and the formal institutionalization of the

intergovernmental conferences essentially formalized this function too. During the IGC,

coordination of electoral activities takes place which produces common election manifesto.

Additionally, the formalization of these meetings contribute to strengthening the *networking*

capacities of the Europarties (Ladrech 2006, 496–97). Along with the Eastern enlargement,

breath of fresh air was inserted into the party federations with the organization of the IGC.

Namely, the meetings allowed the transnational party federations to "facilitate" the

communication between the parties or emulate an arena for transnational cooperation and

policy coordination and planning (Hix 1996, 318–20; Switek 2016, 739–40). The coordination

function comes to the fore in the run up to the European election campaign. In addition to

coordinating the drafting of the party program (*defining goals* function), it also helps to a

certain extent to coordinate the campaign efforts of their national member parties and they were

allowed to show their presence.

This establishment of new rules and links enabled the Europarties to develop the function of *communication* (Hix and Lord 1997, 57). As the institutional structure of the party politics at European level was becoming more complex, it was becoming increasingly more important for Europarties to have open channels for communication, foremost for communication with national level parties, but also with European institutions. In this regard, it was necessary to have regular communication between the national and European level (vertical), but also among the European institutions (horizontal). The importance of the above two functions in the overall organizational structure of the Europarty is epitomized with the employment of party staff for these activities. In most parties, on the grounds of their employment positions, there are several positions that relate to communication and coordination, but also some higher officials that deal with external relations or in the case of PES a deputy secretary general for communications and party organizations (Interview with Representative from EPP 2019; Interview with Representative from PES 2019). Coordination and communication as functions are closely linked together, as the first one implies building links and facilitation of effective communication across all units of organization (Bardi et al. 2010, 8). This refers to all levels of organization in multilevel system.

Probably the most pronounced role of the Europarties in the 1990s was the potential integration of the political parties from the Post-Communist space into the European system, that is the function of *inclusion* (or socialization). The role of education and integration has been frequently employed and was evident in the process of Eastern enlargement. It can also be summarized as inclusion (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 118–19). The Eastern enlargement allowed the then federations to use their socialization function and recognize, prepare and assist parties from Central and Eastern Europe in joining one of the party families (von dem Berge 2013, 132–38). There were screening processes, but also active transfer of knowledge, skills

and impetus for organizational reforms or process of active socialization (Interview with Representative from ALDE 2019).

The increased importance of political foundations at transnational level and their cooperation with national political foundations of the same party family overtook the role of education with new members, preparing them for when they become full members (Interview with Representative from EPP 2019; Interview with Representative from ALDE 2019).

Table 2: Functions and roles of Europarties

	Functions	Roles	
Europarties Functions	Coordination	During intergovernmental conferences	
	Communication	With national parties (vertical) and European institutions (horizontal)	
	Defining goals	Designing of election manifestos and party programs	
	Inclusion (socialization)	Education	During Eastern enlargement
		Integration	
	networking	Of national parties at European level	

Source: author's table, based on (Mittag and Steuwer 2010; Johansson and Raunio 2005; Hanley 2008; Bardi et al. 2014).

The ideal role and functions of the Europarties can be divided into three groups, which are related to the stage of evolutionary development (Day 2005, 62–64): (i) Europarties as facilitating bodies (IG domination); (ii) Europarties as meta networks with political and organizational reach (fulfill only those tasks which the national party cannot, especially important for inclusivity and networking with new and aspiring members); and (iii) Europarties as representative vehicles of European demos. The first two types are clearly incorporated in the functioning of most Europarties, because since Maastricht there are intergovernmental conferences, where national leaders and European counterparts from the same party meet to discuss and prepare their positions before the next Council meeting (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 113–16; Interview with Representative from EPP 2019). The last stage of development, which corresponds to Niedermayer's integration stage, is when the party can be seen as true Europarty with own resources and it is yet to be realized.

5. Organizational Setup – Party Statutes

As it was shown in the previous sections, an important step towards the institutionalization of Europarties has been the adoption of party statutes. Their adoption has led towards greater convergence among parties in terms of the functions they perform and their organizational setup. The adoption of the Regulation 2004/2003 (2004) enabled Europarties to establish their organizational structures which allows us to use them in our comparison. The Regulation also meant that Europarties have obtained legal entity status (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 72). Bearing in mind that rules will tend to promote convergence among entities, Europarties will tend to adapt their organizational outline (Bardi et al. 2014, 28).

As of 2018 there are 10 registered Europarties, however, the review of the literature showed that they differed in the level of institutionalization, size and organizational structure. For the purpose of this study, the party statutes of the four largest and most established Europarties will be taken into account: European People's Party, Party of European Socialists, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and the European Green Party. The first three have established confederation or federation prior to the first direct EP elections and have slowly evolved over the years by implementing the changes arising from the subsequent treaties. The European Green Party experienced more radical changes with the adoption of the Regulation 2004/2003. It has significantly reshaped its organizational structure, and moved from a confederation type of organization to political party (Dietz 2002).

The following section analyzes the most recent party statutes of the four most developed Europarties:

- Statutes of the European People's Party – approved by the EPP Congress on 7 November 2018 in Helsinki;

- Statutes of the European Green Party – adopted by the EGP Council on 12 November 2011 in Paris and last amended by the EGP Council on 31 March 2017 in Liverpool;

- Statutes of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party – adopted by the ALDE Party Congress on 1-3 December 2016 in Warsaw;

- Statutes of the Party of European Socialists – adopted by the 11th PES Congress on 7 December 2018.

In what follows, the thesis will look into the type of membership the parties have, their size and cohesion, the number of party staff each party employs for their daily activities, party organs and their functions, decision-making and finance. These aspects are important to operationalize Panebianco's two concepts, autonomy and systemness. The autonomy will be operationalized through the following indicators: inclusiveness, party staff and ratio staff/membership, financial resources of Europarties and voting rules. Systemness proved more difficult to isolate in the literature, however, Sozzi (2013, 24) suggests to use the level of integration between Europarties and the EP groups, namely, how many members (and which ones) from the EP groups are represented in the organs of the Europarties.

In order to better capture the organizational setup, the chapter will look into three aspects: party organs, other organizations affiliated with the Europarty and party membership and finance.

5.1. Party Organs

The issue of party organization in the study of party politics has gained prominence since the 1990s. In recent decades the transnational organizations of political parties have obtained more permanent organizational structure that function in a new institutional environment. The treaty amendments since Maastricht assured that these new organs continue to develop and exercise their functions assigned with party statutes and internal regulations (Lord 2002, 43–44).

Bearing in mind the importance of the institutional environment the analysis of the organizational setup of Europarties will be based on its institutional context (Bardi et al. 2010, 61).

Table 3: Party organs of Europarties

PES (Art. 9)	ALDE (Art. 10)	EGP (Art. 6)	EPP (Art. 10-18)
• Congress • Election Congress • Council • Presidency • Leaders' Conference • Secretariat	• Congress; • Council; • President/The Bureau. • Secretary General/ • Secretariat	• Council; • the enlarged Council called the Congress; • Committee; • Finance Advisory Board; • Conciliation Panel; • Secretary General	• Presidency • Political Assembly • Congress. • Summit (internal regulations, section III) • Secretary General (Art. 19)

Source: Official statutes of Europarties.

The in-depth analysis of the statutes shows that all four Europarties share three central organs: Congress, Council (Political Assembly), and Presidency (enlarged Council/Bureau under which also operates the Secretary General). Further analysis into the functions performed by these three organs also shows convergence in the tasks they perform, with minor variations for individual parties. The following three sub-sections focus on each of these organs.

5.1.1. Congress

The Congress represents the organ for political discussion of the members of Europarties regarding the party direction. Until the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty the most important function exercised by the Congress was the adoption of common program or platform for the Europarty. However, the linkage of the position of the Commission President with the outcome of the EP elections has provided the Congress with another important function, that of electing a common candidate(s) of the Europarties for President of the EU Commission. This function is regulated by the statutes of the three Europarties (ALDE – Art. 11(e), EPP – Art. 18 and PES – Art. 25.1.).

The inclusive capacity of the Congress can be noted in the sheer size of members being represented at it. Unlike the more exclusive organs, at the Congress all member parties (including individuals), representatives from the EU institutions and other affiliated organizations have their own representatives. The size of the attendees to the Congress ranges from few hundred people for the smaller Europarties to several thousand for the two largest Europarties (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 74).

Table 4: Overview of Europarties Congresses

	Meeting	Competences	Voting	Members
EPP	Every 3y	Deciding EPP program Electing members of the presidency Electing EPP candidate for the President of the European Commission	*Absolute majority; 1 member = 1 vote	EPP presidency Presidents and delegates of party members Heads of state and governments Individual members European Commission members Members of other affiliated organizations
PES	Every 2 ½ years	Elect president and confirm presidency; Adopt resolutions and recommendations; **Electing PES candidate for the President of the European Commission; **Adopt PES Manifesto	Simple majority	Delegates with voting rights: representative from each delegation in the EP; representatives from the CoR; 2 representatives from each full member state; members of the presidency; members of full parties (weighted)
ALDE	Yearly (not more than 18/m)	Approval of common political program; Electing ALDE candidate for the President of the European Commission; Admission, selection and dismissal of the Bureau (presidency) members	Simple majority	Full, affiliate and individual members; Third parties only to participate; Binding decisions on all members (including non-participating)
EGP	Every 2 ½ years	Decide on the common political agenda; Elect members of the other bodies of the EGP; Decide changes on the Statutes, Green Charter and the Rule Book.	*** 2/3 majority	400 delegates proportionally allocated; Each member shall have at least 3 delegates, others distributed on the grounds of electoral results and the size of party;

Information obtained from the interview conducted with a representative from the European People's Party indicated that decisions are taken with simple, rather than absolute majority.
**The Election Congress convened ahead of European Parliament elections (Arts. 25-28 PES Statutes)*
***The interviewee from the European Green Party indicated that the procedure of simple majority is applied during voting.*
Source: Official statutes of Europarties.

Voting rights in the Congress are reserved only for the full members of the Europarty. In the case of ALDE and EGP, where some full members are not part of the EU, a more complex procedure is implemented based on the success of previous elections (EGP – Art. 6.3.6.(2 & 3)) or the number of votes is tied to the status of the national political party, the number of votes obtained in the last elections and the number of individual members (ALDE – Art. 13 and section IV of the Internal Regulations). The number of delegates also depends on the size of the national party. Nevertheless, EGP ensures that at least 50% of the delegates are proportionally divided (Art. 6.4.2.1).

Despite the statutory delimitations, the interviews that I have conducted indicate that there are certain deviations in the (in)formal practices of the respected Europarties. For instance, instead of absolute majority during EPP Congresses (Art. 17 EPP Statutes and Section I(b) of the Internal Regulations of the EPP), it has been indicated that in practice decisions are taken with simple majority (Interview with Representative from EPP 2019). On the one hand, this facilitates the decision-making procedure and makes the Europarty more efficient, but, on the other hand, disregard of written party rules indicates weaker institutionalization. In similar vein, the two-third majority within the European Green Party is not always applied. Instead, it has been pointed out that the party first and foremost seeks consensus building, i.e. it tries to focus on policies and issues, which would be acceptable to all (at least EU member parties). Nonetheless, in other cases decisions are taken with simple majority (Interview with Representative from the EGP 2019). Similar practices are applied also with PES, where during Congress meetings compromise is sought to avoid hurting national parties (Interview with Representative from PES 2019).

5.1.2. Political Assembly (Council)

The Political Assembly is the strategic organ of the Europarties. Organizationally it resembles a steering committee or smaller forum where party leaders can come and discuss the ongoing challenges. The organ was meant to mimic the party leaders' conferences in national party organizations, just as it was the case with the Scandinavian system (Bardi et al. 2010, 61). Some of the central competences of the Political Assembly range from coordinating activities and initiatives of the Europarty to strategic discussion and finance related affairs.

The main differentiation between Europarties regarding the Political Assembly relates to the number of meetings this organ holds. It ranges from 4 times a year for EPP (the most frequent) to (probably) 3 times in 5 years for the PES (meetings are held only in the years when there is no Congress). In ALDE, where the political assembly has additional competences over budgetary affairs, meetings are taking place twice a year (Statutes of Europarties – EPP, PES, ALDE and EGP). The voting rights in the political assembly correspond to those of the Congress. The decisions adopted during the political assembly are not binding for national political parties (ALDE is the exception) and some parties members of PES are allowed also to opt out from participating and decision-making (Interview (2) with Representative from PES 2019).

5.1.3. Presidency/Council/Bureau

The executive organ of the Europarties is the Presidency (Council or Bureau), which is closely linked with the daily operations of the Secretary General. The Presidency's main role is to run the day-to-day affairs of the Europarty and functions as a coordination point between the Congress and the Political Assembly (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 79–80). The organ is responsible for the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Political Assembly or the Congress. Having regard that it is also the representative organ of the Europarty, its more

frequent meetings can be explained through the prism of coordination and decision implementation.

Table 5: Powers and composition of Europarties

	Meeting	Competences	Members
EPP Arts. 11-14	8-times/y	Implementation of Political Assembly decisions Permanent representation of the EPP Preparing annual accounts and budget Ensuring of policies between EPP and EP Groups	**From the Central Office**: President of EPP Vice Presidents Treasurer Secretary General **Other**: Presidents of the Commission, Parliament, HR for Foreign Affairs, European Council (if affiliated)
PES Arts. 33-36	At least 3 times/y	Implementation of the Congress and Council (PA) decisions Recommendations for the general political guidelines Convene Council and set agenda Budgetary affairs	**From the Central Office**: President of PES Vice Presidents Secretary General **Other**: President of the EP Group One representative per each full member state
ALDE Arts. 21-25	At least 3 times/y	Set advisory and working groups	President Vice Presidents (9) Treasurer
EGP Art. 6(5)	6 times/y	Permanent political representation of the EGP Implementation of the Council decisions Day-to-day management of the EGP	Female + male co-chair Secretary General Treasurer Five more members

Sources: Official Statutes of Europarties.

5.2. Other Bodies

In the last decade after the adoption of Regulation 1524/2007, the number of affiliated organizations has grown. They primarily focus on the networking function by bringing together a specific group, such as youth or women organization. Additionally, they help with coordination of party activities and strategic planning between national parties – IGC, and provide knowledge, expertise and research through the political foundations.

5.2.1. Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the development of the Europarties coincided with the beginning of the organization of the IGC between national party leaders. The IGCs serve as a coordination platform between national leaders before European Council meetings in order to improve the policy synergy (Oppelland 2008, 460–61). In addition to national leaders and depending on the topic of discussion, other entities, such as Commissioners or Ministers, can also be invited. Europarties play important role during the IGC, because they are the ones who are setting the agenda. As such, the discussions can be steered to the "benefit" of the Europarty. An example of this were the coordination between Martens, DeClerq and Spitaels before the Maastricht Treaty, who used the IGC to further their idea of "party article," later incorporated in the upcoming treaty (Johansson and Raunio 2005, 521–22).

Having regard that IGCs take place before the European Council meetings and the attendees are leaders of national parties (and heads of states and governments), the meetings of the EGP leaders are not as institutionalized and are only informal (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 81). In ALDE, the leaders' conference is also regulated within the Internal Organization document, section12. With regard to the participants, PES is more similar to ALDE, as the leaders' conferences/meetings entail greater number of participants.

5.2.2. European Political Foundations and Other Network Organizations

The organizational development of Europarties since 2004 has been immense. Europarties have grown in the number of affiliated associations and foundations and managed to establish youth, student and women sections which share the ideological orientation of the Europarty (Berge 2015, 72–75).

Table 6: Network organizations of the Europarties

Europarty	Organizations
EPP	16 associations • 6 EU and beyond • 6 associations (youth, CD students and women section) • 4 foundations
PES	19 organizations • 5 full time organizations • 5 associated organizations • 9 observer organization
ALDE	6 associations/networks,
EGP	12 organizations • 10 networks and working groups • Youth section and the party foundation

Sources: Web pages of the Europarties.

After the adoption of the amendments to provide legal basis for Europarties, the question that arose was if there should be European Political Foundations, just like the ones at national level to complement their work? The answer came several years later with the adoption of the new Regulation ("Towards Policy-Seeking Europarties? The Development of European Political Foundation" n.d.). European Political Foundations became integral part of the organizational structure of the Europarties with the adoption of the Regulation 1524/2007, whose aim was to further regulate Europarties and their financing. The first EPFs were established in 2008 and since became attached to the work of each Europarty. Financial support was also envisaged to be allocated to the EPF affiliated with Europarties.

In Art. 1 of the Regulation 1524/2007 EPF are defined as (Regulation (EC) 1524/2007 2007):

> "political foundation at European level" means an entity or network of entities which has legal personality in a Member State, is affiliated with a political party at European level and which through its activities…underpins and complements the objectives of the political party at European level."

The most important tasks to be performed by these Foundations are drawn from the functions of Europarties and include the coordination of activities of national political foundations at the European level.

Table 7: Political foundations at the European level related to the four Europarties

Europarty	European Political Foundation
European People's Party	Wilfried Martens Center for European Studies
Party of European Socialists	Foundation for European Progressive Studies
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe	European Liberal Forum
European Green Party	Green European Foundation

Source: Author's compilation from web pages of the Europarties.

5.3. Increased Institutionalization

5.3.1. Finance

Having access to party finance is an essential element for Europarties to be able to become more autonomous and structurally more institutionalized. As there were no provisions envisaged in 1970s, the system looked closed for new entrants which resulted in initiating a procedure in front of the European Court of Justice by the newly created Green Federation. The resulting lack of legal provisions forced the hand of the Court to rule party financing at European level as illegal (Smith 1996; Les Verts v European Parliament 1986). Until the adoption of Regulation 2004/2003, this decision effectually hindered further development of Europarties. Since 2004 and following the legal foundation of Europarties and allocation of financial resources from the European budget, the funds have been constantly on the rise. Bearing in mind the aforementioned, this section will limit its analysis only to years of direct party financing, i.e. from 2004.

The introduction of Europarty funding directly as a grant from the European Parliament came after long and intensive discussions and coordination between the major institutions. The

40

process which started in the 1970s was capped eventually in 2004 when it was decided that the funds will be allocated by the European Parliament (Johansson and Raunio 2005, 526–27).

Table 8: Financial resources of Europarties from EP grants (2004-2008, in millions)

Europarty	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
EPP	1.6	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.4
PES	1.3	2.5	2.6	2.9	3
ALDE	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1
EGP	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6

Source: Data collected from the European Parliament ("Political Parties and Foundations" 2019). Also from Mittag and Steuwer (2010, 86).

The increase of the funds available as a grant from the European Parliament along with the membership fees from national member parties (and individual members) meant more responsibilities for Europarties, but also allowed for the employment of more staff to respond to the new environment. This can also be reflected in the growing number of staff that Europarties employ and the increased complexities of functions they have to perform.

In addition, the linking of the EP election results to the Commission President position has also called for greater contribution towards Europarties, as the need for campaigning has arisen. Although, the Regulation does provide space for private donations, the two largest parties reported no donations. In this regard, the EPP interviewee confirmed that as a Europarty "we [EPP] are not taking any donations…it gives you more room to maneuver and become more transparent" (Interview with Representative from EPP 2019), although in Art. 24 EPP Statutes it is stated that in case of donations they will be reported in the yearly financial report.

Table 9: Financial revenue (EP grants + membership fees) for 2017

Europarty	EP Grant to Europarties	Membership fees: member parties + individual	Donations + contribution in kind	Other own resources
EPP	8 018 034	1 196 795 + 460	/	291 750
PES	6 901 688	1 092 727	/	236 098
ALDE	2 468 649	428 100 + 26 429	156 790 + 6 470	146
EGP	1 865 999	525 545 + 13 359	915 + 47 406	5 654

Source: Audit reports of the respective Europarties ("European Green Party Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "European Green Party Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "European People's Party Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "Party of European Socialists Audit Report for 2017" n.d.).

The last of the series of regulations since 2000s came in 2014, which has furthered institutionalized the status of Europarties and EPF (Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No. 1141/2014 2014). It has created a legal basis for EPF and at the same time it has also provided conditions for more transparent Europarties in terms of their financing. The new authorities or ad hoc organs were expected to more closely supervise the funding and expenditure of the Europarties and EPF (Bardi et al. 2014, 43).

5.3.2. Party staff

Paniebianco (1988, 223) points to the importance and role of party leaders in the management of political parties, however, he also argues that the role of bureaucrats should not be neglected as well. Since the establishment of the federations/confederations the number of permanently employed staff is constantly growing, which points at the increasing importance of Europarties to a certain extent. The number of members has also grown which means that larger staff is required to carry out coordination and communication activities.

Table 10: Party staff evolution 1979-2019

Party	1979-1984	1985-1989	1990-1994	1995-1999	2009	2019
EPP	5	7	10	10	19	41
PES	5	7	13	12	18	43
ALDE	4	6	6	7	7	39
EGP	/	/	/	/	2	39

Source: Web pages of Europarties (https://www.epp.eu/people/, https://europeangreens.eu/about-us, https://www.pes.eu/en/about-us/the-party/, https://www.aldeparty.eu/about/structure/bureau) and Sozzi 2013, 21).

The increase of finance allocated to the Europarties from the EP budget has also allowed them to increase their staff (and along its structure as many new positions were developed). From the rather modest numbers of party staff at the beginning in the 1970s or even in the late 1990s, today the Europarties are rather well-developed unit. This has helped Europarties in their day-to-day activities, but also enabled them to better coordinate with their national member parties.

In addition, new staff was also hired to lead the European campaign and assist the leading candidates.

The information regarding the staff presented at the web pages of the four leading Europarties also includes the staff (such as campaign coordinators, campaign managers and assistants) employed for the purposes of the European election campaign, therefore, it might be slightly higher than in non-election years. This also indicates the increasing importance of the European elections and the need for better coordination of the campaign across the member states, as this requires staff that can focus constantly on the campaign and not staff that has to deal with both the campaign and administrative affairs.

5.3.3. Membership

Among the Europarties there are some divergencies regarding the type of membership, how the membership is structured and who has voting rights in different situations. The first and most important difference between Europarties is the existence of individual membership. Individual membership exists in EPP, ALDE and in some form EGP, whereas PES has initially (in 1992) rejected this possibility, only to introduce category of internet-based "PES activists" that closely resembles individual membership.

Another important aspect relates to membership status and voting rights, i.e. whether full members from non-EU contries have voting rights and regarding which policies. Should this turn out to be the case, it shows that it is a sign of weaker form of institutionalization (Bressanelli 2014, 170–71). For instance, EGP accepts parties from Europe (as a geographical unit) as full members and only those outside Europe's (and not EU) borders are considered to be associate members. ALDE also accepts parties originating from non-EU countries as full members.

Table 11: Types of membership

EPP (Art. 5)	PES (Art. 7)	ALDE (Art. 6)	EGP (Arts. 4 & 5)
Ordinary member parties	Full members	Full members	Full members
			Candidate members (from Europe)
Associated member parties	Associated members	Affiliate member = associate member	Associate members (outside Europe)
Observer members	Observer members		Special category = amounts individual membership
		Individual members	
Individual members	"PES activists"		

Sources: Official statutes of Europarties.

The inclusiveness of Europarties can be regarded as the ability to incorporate growing number of parties and have elected MEPs from these parties (or member states) to the EP (Sozzi 2013, 18–20). In the 2014 EP elections, the two largest parties, EPP and PES, were represented from all member states. The numbers are lower for ALDE and EGP, nevertheless, they are still represented in larger portion of member states. Another important aspect for institutionalization is to relate the number of member parties with the number of people employed by the Europarties. The assumption is that the larger the number of people is, the more tasks they are able to complete (and functions to exercise), therefore, the better the institutionalization it is (Sedlakova 2013). The total staff since 1970s has been slowly growing (see table 10), however, in recent year it noted substantial increase across all four Europarties.

Table 12: Member parties and staff/membership ratio

	Full members	Parties in the EP, 2014	Associate members	Observer members (candidate for EGP)	Total	Total number of staff	Ratio (staff to members)
EPP	47	28	6	24	77	41	41/77 (1/1.8)
PES	33	28	12	12	57	43	43/57 (1/1.3)
ALDE	52 (39/EU)	21	17	/	69	39	39/69 (1/1.8)
EGP	37 (29/EU)	18	4	3	44	39	39/63 (1/1.7)

Source: European Parliament and Europarties data.

6. Case Studies: EPP and PES within the New Framework

After setting up the terrain by presenting the organizational structure and functions of Europarties on the grounds of their statutes, internal organization rules as well as the information obtained from the interviews, the following section: (i) will analyze the process of Europarty institutionalization, and (ii) design an organizational framework through the prism of European People's Party and Party of European Socialists, which are the biggest political parties at European level and have dominated European politics and elections since their establishment. The framework builds on the previous attempts of Hix and Mittag and includes new organizational structure, such as the EPF and the other organizations affiliated to it. The organizational framework gives insight into the institutional development of Europarties.

Both parties, EPP and PES, are considered to have advanced beyond the initial stages of merely cooperating or establishing contacts with other similar parties at European level and have achieved certain level of integration(Johansson 2002, 55). By this, I mean that certain decisions adopted by the organs of the Europarty are taken with majority and the internal rules and regulations are accepted by the member parties.

6.1. Level of Institutionalization of EPP and PES

The process of institutionalization of the Europarties is evaluated by looking at two concepts derived from Panebianco (1988): autonomy (from national parties) and systemness or integration at European level. The degree of autonomy is measured through the following indicators (see also, Sozzi 2013): *inclusiveness* (How European are the Europarties – the more nationalities, the more European), *party staff and party staff ratio* (structural independence from national parties - the more staff (the better ratio) the more functions can be exercised by

Europarties), *finance* (less dependence on national parties for sustenance) and *voting rules* (What kind of majority is required? Who is allowed to vote? and Are the decisions binding?).

Table 13: Inclusiveness, staff and finance of Europarties

	All parties	Parties from the EU	EU member states	Party Staff	Ratio Staff/members	Finance
EPP	77	47	27	41	41/77 (1:1.8)	8 million EUR
PES	57	33	28	43	43/57 (1:1.3)	6.9 million EUR

Source: Author's compilation. Based on web pages information and financial reports of Europarties.

The first three indicators – inclusiveness, party staff and finance – show how far and institutionalized the Europarties have become. Let's focus on the first indicator, which indicates that the more political parties there are (from EU states), the more inclusive the Europarties are. In this regard EPP has national member parties in every member state except for the UK, whilst PES is present in all EU member states. Both Europarties have members from non-European countries. With regard to the inclusiveness indicator this might bore well, however, the problems arise when we relate to the cohesion and interconnectedness with EPGs. First, having more parties outside Europe also means greater ideological differences. Second, since these parties do not have voting rights (see the voting section above), what would make them implement the decisions adopted by Europarties? From this point of view, the inclusion of more parties (especially from non-EU even non-Europe countries) also means weaker institutionalization of both EPP and PES.

Nonetheless, the other two indicators for autonomy, party staff and finance, show increased institutionalization of both Europarties. Compared to 2009 (see table 10) the total number of party staff has significantly increased for both parties. Further signs of increased institutionalization are the position of employment. Both Europarties have clear structure with division of responsibilities in different areas of their VPs and a team who works on realizing

all functions of the Europarties (listed in …) from coordination and communication officer to campaign managers. Further evidence of increased institutionalization is shown with the staff to members ratio. In national context leaders control and administer the political party (Panebianco 1988), however, at the EU level the more staff is employed, the better Europarties can function and subsequently the more institutionalized they are (Sozzi 2013). The analysis in previous section (on membership and staff) has shown that there is substantial increase in the number of employed people, which improves communication and coordination between national parties and at European level.

The section on origins and development of Europarties has shown that the turning point for the financial autonomy of Europarties has been the adoption of Regulation 2004/2003 that provided the legal basis for the party statute and party financing. Since 2004 (see table 8) the grants allocated to Europarties has grown five-fold. The sum received from membership fees has also increased. More importantly, the Europarties now possess "other own resources" independent from the national parties ("European People's Party Audit Report for 2017" n.d.; "Party of European Socialists Audit Report for 2017" n.d.).

Table 14: Decisional autonomy of Europarties

	Organs	Majority rule	Binding
EPP	Presidency	Absolute majority	No
	Political Assembly	Absolute majority	
	Congress	Absolute majority	
PES	Presidency		No
	Council	Simple majority in administrative and organizational matters;	
		Qualified majority on policy matter	
	Congress		

 *with voting rights; **without voting rights
Source: Official statutes of Europarties.

The operationalization of the fourth indicator, voting rules, and its measurement proved to be more challenging. The first three indicators capture the structural autonomy, whilst the fourth

focuses on the decisional dimension. Table 14 shows that with regard to decisional autonomy the outcome is not in favor of stronger institutionalization. Europarties are still dominated with majority voting rules that favor national delegations with relatively high thresholds for policy decisions. The adopted decisions are not binding for the national parties to implement them (Interview with Representative from PES 2019). The institutionalization is further "compromised" as the interviews indicated that there are discrepancies between the formal and informal rules. On the one hand, the predominant way of decision-making continues to be consensual, and on the other hand, within EPP there is a tendency to also make decisions with simple majority, although the statute prescribes absolute majority. Overall, EPP and PES are now much more autonomous vis-à-vis the national parties. They are better financially equipped and have substantially increased the number of people who work at the Europarty. In the short term the inclusion of many parties from non-EU countries appears to harm the inclusiveness, however, when we consider that most of the parties come from candidate-countries and take into account the importance of education and integration function, then one may also point to the long-term benefits of this process.

The second concept to measure institutionalization is systemness measured through the proportion of de jure attendance (as prescribed by the party statutes and internal regulations) of EPG representatives to Europarties organs or how many national member parties from one Europarty are also represented in the same party grouping in the European Parliament.

Table 15: Integration/Interconnectedness of Europarties

	Organs	*De jure* attendance	*Share of member parties from the EU and parties in the EP*
EPP	Presidency	Chairperson of the EPG	42/47 (89%) 27 member states
	Political Assembly	National delegations' presidents of the EPG	
	Congress	Representatives from the EPG* Parliamentarians from the EPG**	
PES	Presidency	President of the EPG	31/33 (94%) 28 member states

	Council	Representatives from the EPG equal to 50% of national delegations	
	Congress	Representatives from each national delegation from the EPG* All MEPs**	

Sources: VoteWatch Europe, EPP & PES statutes (VoteWatch Europe 2019; Party 2019; "Parties Map" 2019; "PES Statutes Adopted by the 11th PES Congress on 7th December 2018" n.d.; "EPP Statutes Adopted by the Helsinki Congress on 7 November 2018" n.d.).

The systemness indicator operationalized as such is useful to measure the degree of interconnectedness between Europarties and EPGs, or in Katz and Mair's (1993) understanding, the central office with the public office. One of the challenges for the operationalization was the different structure between the two. On the one hand, Europarties are much more encompassing and have members even from outside Europe's borders. On the other hand, some members of the EPG are not members of the Europarty. For these reasons, the scope of party members has been limited only to parties from the EU and the share is calculated on the percentage of national parties' members of the Europarty that also represented in the EPG. The analysis shows that PES is more integrated with its PG (S&D) compared to EPP when it comes to the interconnectedness between the two. On the other hand, when it comes to EPGs participation in the Europarties organs, the analysis shows that EPP PG is more involved with the Europarty. The focus here is on the political assembly, where EPP PG sends all national delegation presidents, while PES PG sends representatives only equal to 50% from all delegations. EPP PG has more representatives with the right to vote in the central organs of the Europarty compared to PES.

One final aspect to consider regarding the institutionalization of the Europarties is to look at cohesion, i.e. what is the ideological range within the Europarty (Bardi 1995, 934–35; Hix and Lord 1997, 23–27). The aim of this section is to link institutionalization with the permanence of organizational structure and the starting point is the relationship between inclusiveness of Europarties and cohesion within Europarties. This refers to the presence of several parties from

a member state in the same party families. Whilst for federal party systems, such as the Belgian case, this might constitute a major problem, for unitary states where there are few national member parties (with different ideology), it can potentially affect the cohesion of the group.

Previous research has shown that ideology can also impact the organizational structure. There are differences between center-right and center-left parties. While the first tend to be less bureaucratized, the latter have more cumbersome and complex structure (Enyedi and Linek 2008). Despite the broad ideological character of the Europarties, the organizational structure points towards differences in organizational structure, as there are differences in the level of regulation between the two blocks (this can be seen from the party statutes analysis in the previous section).

In the section on evolution and development of Europarties it was shown that during the Eastern enlargement process, EPP has been especially active and integrated parties with not always compatible ideologies. This is illustrated with the mean positions and ranges of party families:

Figure 3: Positions of party families
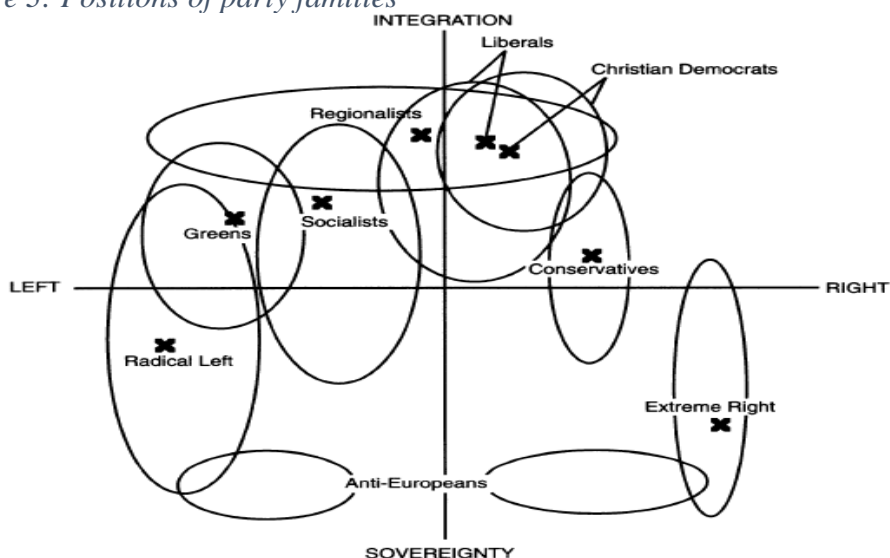
Source: Hix and Lord (Hix and Lord 1997, 50).

Although there is no direct relationship between ideology and party organization the presence of ideology can still have an impact on the organizational structure of Europarties (Enyedi and

50

Linek 2008). Therefore, the ideological differences within Europarties may explain the differences in formal structural organization between Europarties.

6.2. Organizational Framework

Over the years EPP and PES have shown signs of convergence of their organizational structure and the functions performed by their organs. The minor differences between the two parties refer to how their organs are functioning and mostly relate to the number of meetings they held. The table serves as a quick overview of the organizational setup of the two Europarties.

*Table 16: EPP and PES - organizational comparison*

	EPP	PES	Notes
Congress	Yes: Every 3y	Yes: Every 2 ½ years	PES – qualified majority; EPP – absolute majority* (although informally simple majority)
Political Assembly	Yes: 4 times a year	Yes: 3 times per term	EPP's has greater competences
Presidency/Council	Yes: 8-times a year	Yes: 3-times a year	EPP's meetings also include representatives from affiliated organizations; the setting is broader
Secretary General	Yes	Yes	Control function and day-to-day operations
Youth Section	Yes:	Yes	EPP has also section on students and for Christian Democrats
Individual membership	Yes	No	
Finance: donations	Yes	Yes	Although they are regulated in the statute neither party accepts donations
Nomination for lead candidate	Yes	Yes	During Europarty congress

Source: author's elaboration on the basis of Europarties' statutes.

The first efforts to capture the organizational structure of Europarties and the complex method of coordination between national parties and the parliamentary groups are made by Hix and Lord (Hix and Lord 1997, 55–57). Since these first efforts in the 1990s, the system has somewhat evolved, particularly with some of the newly acquired powers and competences of Europarties which were captured to a certain extent by Mittag and Steuwer (2010). The first figure presents a broad overview of the communication and coordination between national

parties, the Europarties and the Parliamentary Groups, while the second figure showcases the structural setup of the Europarties. Nevertheless, what is missing here are the functions performed by Europarties (see figure 6). This is something that the thesis will address by providing a more comprehensive and overarching framework.

Figure 4: Organigram of Europarties
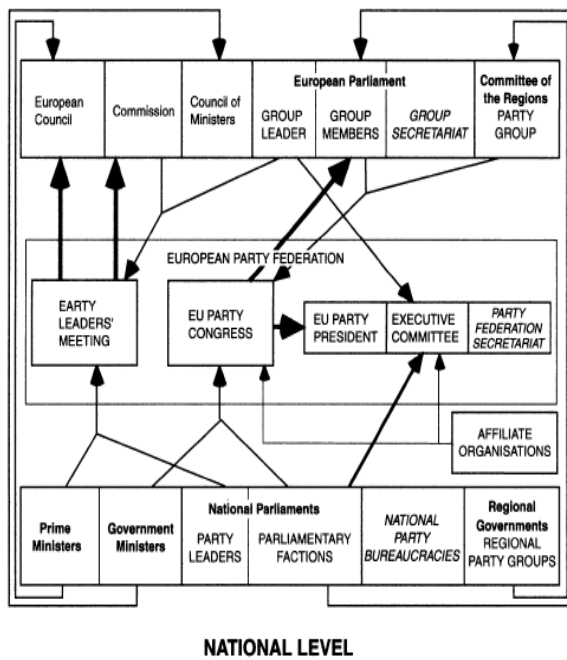
Source: (Hix and Lord 1997, 56)

*Figure 5: Organizational structure*
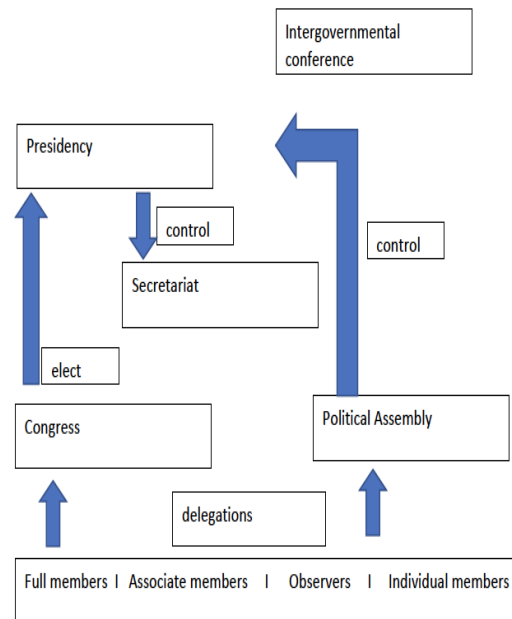
Source: based on the organizational   structure of (Mittag and Steuwer 2010, 74)

Further importance for my framework is drawn from Niedermayer's (1983) model for organizational development of Europarties which consists of three stages of transnational intersection – contact stage, cooperation stage and integration stage. The first stage is the genesis of the party and the development of party programs. The second stage entails the furthering of the organization's structural components. The final stage is the supranationalization process or individual development of parties without hindrance from national parties and within the framework of the newly developed institutional environment (Niedermayer 1983, 57–114). In the following framework, there are three levels of operation:

52

the supranational, national and the meso-level where the Europarties are located as a bridge between the two.

Figure 6: Functions of Europarties
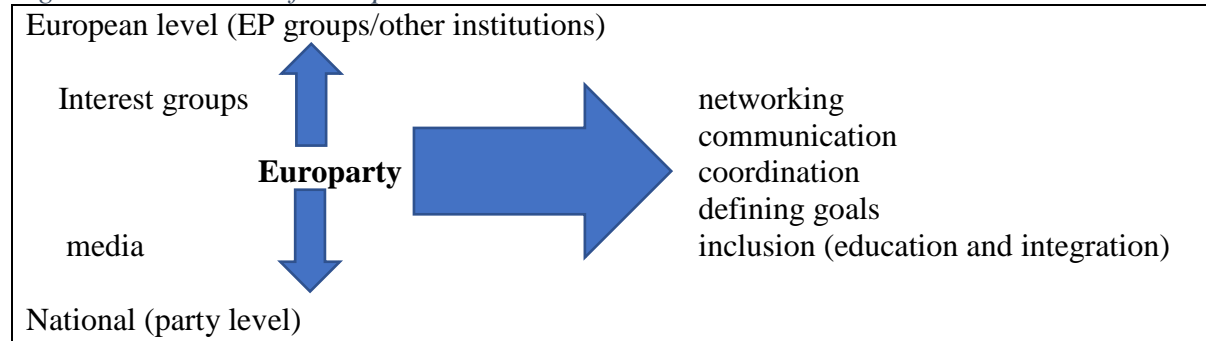
Source: Figure based on literature review (Bardi et al. 2014; Johansson and Raunio 2005; Bukow and Höhne 2013; Mittag and Steuwer 2010; Oppelland 2008).

Looking at EPP and PES through the prism of this early attempt to present the organizational development, which serves as a foundation for later studies, it can be noticed that the two parties are moving slowly towards the last stage of integration. The two Europarties played particularly important role during the second stage of cooperation, that is to say the coordination of policies and inclusion of new members. Recently, EPP and PES have put greater focus on the IGC prior to the European Council as this gives them greater visibility within the EU institutional framework (Gagatek 2009, 301–2).

Since the presentation of these frameworks, the organization and functions of Europarties have progressed and it is necessary to account for the progress. The progress refers to the official legal recognition of the "parties" at European level, but also to the increased finances and role of affiliated associations, such as the political foundations, youth sections etc. On the basis of the analysis of party statutes, the internal organizational documents of the Europarties and the interviews, the new framework reflects these changes and is presented as follows:

Figure 7: Ideal typical organization of Europarties
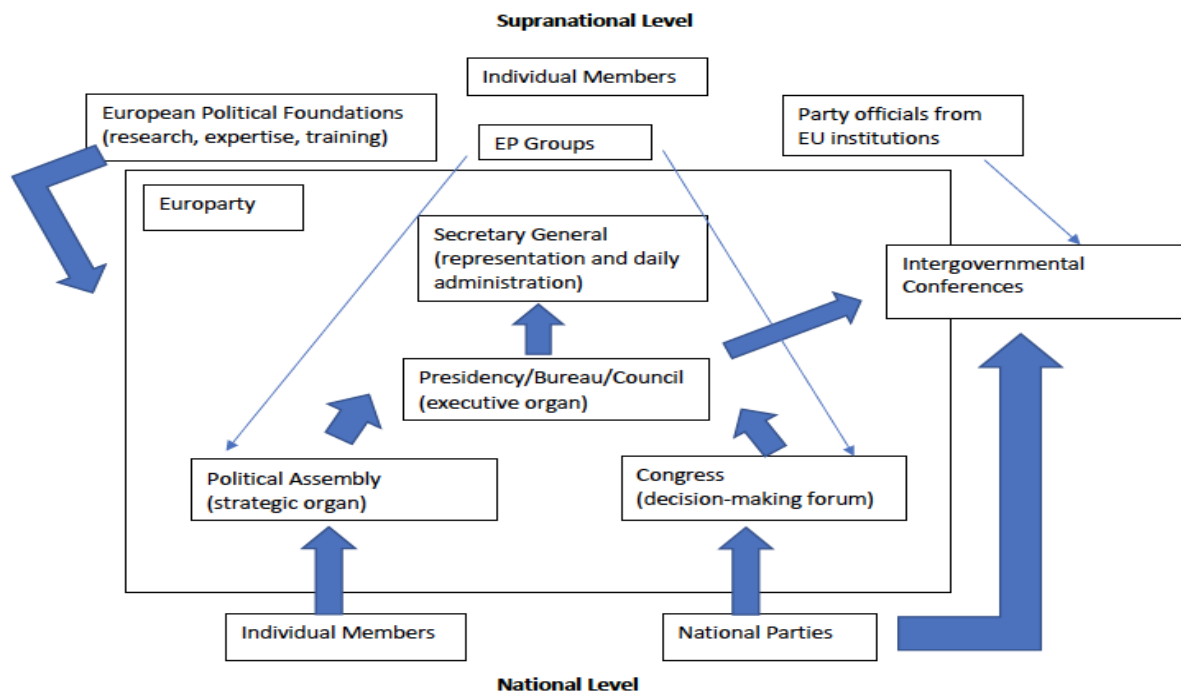
Source: Author's framework.

The three central organs of the Europarty are the presidency/bureau, political assembly and congress. The two important aspects where Europarties have particularly developed since the 1990s are the intergovernmental conferences and the functions attributed to the European political foundations. The EPF is considered to be a complementary institution for the Europarty, which along with its network of national foundations contributes to research and training capacities of the Europarty and assists the Europarty in the development of policies (Interview with Representative from PES 2019).

The first aspect of the newly proposed framework is the formalization of IGC – party summits or leaders' conferences. The importance of the intergovernmental conferences for the two leading parties – EPP and PES – has proved to be instrumental for two reasons. After initially serving as informal forum for national leaders to meet and discuss the direction of the party, over time it became more institutionalized and the closed cooperation with the strategic organ set the direction for future development. Having regard that these two parties have the highest

number of heads of states, it provides further importance before any European Council meeting. As it has been stressed by the interviewee from EPP, this helps the party to better coordinate the party's position (Interview with Representative from EPP 2019). The importance of the IGC for the strategic development of the two Europarties is enshrined in the constituting documents. EPP's meetings are regulating in section V of the Internal Regulation documents ("Internal Regulations of the European People's Party" n.d.), whilst within PES the leaders' conference is regulated in section VII, Articles 38-40, of their statute ("PES Statutes Adopted by the 11th PES Congress on 7th December 2018" n.d.). The officialization of the process helps with the institutionalization process. Additionally, IGCs are also considered as arena of "real party competition" between national parties of the same family, but also vis-à-vis European institutions' officials which are also represented during the meetings. This intergovernmental character creates a link between the national level and the supranational level, in the spirit of MEPs and officials from other supranational institutions (Commissioners).

Coming from small informal gatherings in the 1980s, the stature of IGC has grown over the years. Europarties role has also evolved. From merely collecting and aggregating interests of national party positions (Hix 1993), to greater role for agenda-setting and policy shaping. The incorporation of the IGC into the statutory documents of the Europarties also points towards this direction and as such is an important element in the organizational structure.

The second aspect of the new framework is the institutionalization of the EPF. Regulation 1141/2014 (Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No. 1141/2014 2014) in Art. 5 regulates the governance of EPF, and through it EPFs have developed their own statutes and networks with national foundations. As we can see from the framework, the EPF operate at the supranational level and provide their knowledge and expertise to the Europarty and works in close

cooperation with all three organs for development of European policies (Interview (2) with Representative from the Party of European Socialists - PES 2019).

In the 1990s during the Eastern enlargement, Europarties played central role in the inclusion of the parties from the region to a respective family. This meant close monitoring and mentoring of the prospective members in order to bring closer their ideological positions. Since the formalization of the EPF in the 2000s, these functions of know-how dissemination and education were undertaken by the political foundations. EPP has significantly grown in this period by accepting new members states from the Eastern European region (although not always with the same ideological positions). The EPP's foundation is Wilfried Martens Center for European Studies and is named after its long-term president and one of the advocates for greater party development at European level Wilfried Martens. The PES counterpart is called Foundation for European Progressive Studies.

Both parties extensively use the knowledge and expertise of the EPFs and the opportunity to coordinate during IGC. Both structures are highly institutionalized parts of the Europarty and are considered to be important elements at the European level. The presidency of the Europarty has particular impact during the IGC, because it is the presidency that set the agenda for the discussions that ensue (Interview with Representative from EPP 2019; Interview (2) with Representative from PES 2019). The second point analyzed here, EPF, has also been institutionalized at the European level, by being part of the statutory setup and complement to the main three organs and receiving funds, which contributes to its financial autonomy from national foundations. Their institutionalization provides enthralling evidence about the evolving relationship and interplay between national and European level. Their close cooperation with national foundations, on the one hand, and the research focus that is European, on the other hand, show embryonic signs of stimulating development of "European

civil society" (Dakowska 2009, 203). On the organizational scale they are located close to the supranational level and their close integration of the work of Europarties witnesses this.

Conclusion

"It cannot be doubted that the Europarties are here to stay" (Day 2005, 71). However, the challenge is the permanence of their organizational structure and the extent to which they can become institutionalized. This thesis looked at Europarty development and designed a framework for their comparison, which is based on the level of institutionalization and organizational setup. The constitutionalization of Europarties came with Regulation 2004/2003, which enhanced their position at European level. It provided them with status of legal entity and financial stability to continue their development. Europarties have adapted to their new environment and developed their functions (different from national) that are implemented by the Europarties' organs. The important outcome from the Regulation was the unambiguous role of Europarties within the EU political system.

The first aspect of the comparative framework was to look at the level of institutionalization of EPP and PES. The detailed analysis of the Europarty literature shows that Europarties are moving towards stronger institutionalization. This was confirmed with the research of statutes, internal regulations and financial reports of EPP, PES, ALDE and EGP. The analysis reveals increased organizational convergence among the four Europarties and set of functions that are common for them all. Additional research into the two leading parties, EPP and PES, also shows increased level of institutionalization. The two factors of Panebianco's institutionalization, autonomy and systemness, were operationalized and tested on EPP and PES. In certain aspects (for autonomy) such as party staff and staff/membership ration both parties show substantial development. Other aspects, such as voting rules and binding of decisions, are still fledgling, but there are certain encouraging signs. On the systemness level, the thesis looked into the interconnectedness between the EPGs and Europarties and their

58

degree of cohesion. Both parties exhibit high level of institutionalization on the level of representation of national parties in the EPGs and Europarty.

The second aspect of the comparative framework was to look at the organizational setup of Europarties and analyze the function of two bodies, IGC and EPF. Although IGCs is intergovernmental in its character, Europarties through their presidency exhibit influence on the agenda-setting to a certain extent. On the other hand, EPFs are supranational in their character and are complementary organizations to the Europarty with their knowledge, expertise and position to conduct research. Europarties are still evolving and their areas of activities are growing, nevertheless, since 2004 the set of reforms provided an opportunity to present a framework for their comparison. The organs and organizations seem to be there to stay, which makes it simpler for future comparisons.

The case studies of the thesis were limited to the two biggest Europarties, EPP and PES, because, as two biggest parties that were present since the 1970s and were always closely linked to the evolution process. The literature has shown that not all Europarties have the same institutional and organizational development as EPP and PES (although ALDE and EGP might prove to also fit into this framework) and therefore, the generalization of the framework might be limited. Nevertheless, as ALDE and EGP are becoming more important actors at the EU level, future analysis could look to apply this framework to these cases as well and extend it beyond.

Other limitations that may arise from the research is the timing of the interviews. They were conducted between May and June 2019 in the middle of the EP elections and as a result, the Europarty elites were not always easy to contact. The interviews were conducted mainly via electronic media such as Skype, WhatsApp and phone call, and not face-to-face that sometimes offer additional cues from the interviewee.

Finally, future developments in European politics (either transnational lists or genuine European campaigning) adds additional dimensions to the analysis, which will need to be incorporated in the framework. Overall, the comparative framework represents a solid step for further comparisons of Europarties. The data collected through detailed analysis of statutes, internal regulations and financial reports as well as the data obtained from the interviews with Europarty elites can be a great contribution to the study of party politics at European level.

Appendix A

Discussion points (sample)[1]
Interview with …

Presenting the topic of my research and my institutional affiliation.

- General introduction about their Europarty: formation, structure and functions they perform.

- Are any of its functions similar to the functions of national parties?

- How is the secretariat or the central office organized?

- How is the membership divided within the Europarty and voting structure?

- What are the role of the Europarty organs in coordination and communication with national parties and other EU institutions?

- How is the central office coordinating the activities of national parties and the EPG?

- How is the lead candidate (Spitzenkandidat) selected/nominated? How do you select candidates for European elections?

- What about the party statutes, since 2004, it allowed the federations to gain some independence from the party groups, own offices and staffs? They obtained a legal personality and how important was this for the development in the past 15 years and how it will affect future development (Regulation 2004/2003).

- How are its finance organized? (donations, party funding from the European budget, finance of the European campaign)

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[1] The following discussion points served only as guidelines, because there were many individual points for every Europarty that could not be structured in one questionnaire. It has also allowed the interviewees to elaborate on some of their (in)formal practices in more detail.

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