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***The parliamentary challenge in the EU
and the EEA:
an increasing gap***

By

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Abstract:

The role of parliaments and parliamentarians has been at the core of the discussions on the ‘democratic deficit’ in the EU. From being the ‘losers’ of European integration, representative institutions have during the last decade played an increasingly more prominent role in governing Europe. In the article, we argue that the parliamentary dynamism in the EU has no parallel in the EEA or the EFTA States. We have not seen a strengthening of parliamentary institutions in the EEA structures, and the national parliaments of the EFTA Member States have not made adjustments enabling them to get a stronger role in governing European affairs. There is thus an increasing gap between the EU and the EEA regarding parliamentary involvement. The article examines the process of gradually strengthening the parliaments in the EU. It documents the limited formal and actual role played by parliaments and parliamentarians in the EEA construction. In addition, it compares the activities of a national parliament in an EU Member State with those of a parliament in an EFTA State. We conclude by arguing that the new constitution is likely to further increase the gap between parliamentary involvement in the EU and EFTA.

Introduction¹

Since the signing of the EEA Agreement, the European Union (EU) has changed dramatically. A series of enlargements, treaty revisions and expansion into new policy areas have changed the workings of the EU. In spite of these radical changes, the EEA Agreement has prevailed without any major significant changes. In fact, the EEA Agreement has functioned as an effective springboard for extending the co-operation between the EU and EFTA in new policy areas.

However, there is an increasing gap between the institutional dynamism in the EU and the static institutional set up of the EEA. In this article we discuss the role of representative institutions in the EU and the EEA. For any legitimate political organisation, the role of the representative institutions is critical. The role of parliaments and parliamentarians has been at the core of the discussions on the ‘democratic deficit’ in the EU. From being the ‘losers’ of European integration, representative institutions have during the last decade played an increasingly more prominent role in governing Europe. The European Parliament has become a more important institution with considerable formal and informal competencies, and the national parliaments of the Member States have strengthened their abilities to shape and influence European politics.

In the article, we argue that the parliamentary dynamism in the EU has no parallel in the EEA or the EFTA States. We have not seen a strengthening of parliamentary institutions in the EEA structures, and the national parliaments of the EFTA Member States have not

¹ We would like to thank all the ones that have been willing to share information on, and experiences from, the EFTA parliamentary co-operation, in particular Loa Brynjulfsdottir and Morten Høglund.

made adjustments enabling them to get a stronger role in governing European affairs. There is thus an increasing gap between the EU and the EEA regarding parliamentary involvement.

The article is organised as follows. First we have analysed the process of gradually strengthening the parliaments in the EU. Second, we have analysed the limited formal and actual role played by parliaments and parliamentarians in the EEA construction. Third, we have compared the activities of a national parliament in an EU Member State with those of a parliament in an EFTA State. We have concluded by arguing that the new constitution is likely to further increase the gap between parliamentary involvement in the EU and EFTA.

The rise of parliaments in the EU

During the last decade, the issue of democratic deficit has been at the centre of the discussions in the European Union. Although there have been different views as to the causes and symptoms of and remedies for this gap, most agree that the role of representative institutions is critical for a democratic and legitimate governance in Europe. In this period, we have seen a strengthening of the role of the EP and changes in national parliaments. Let us examine these institutional developments briefly.

The European Parliament has always been a contested institution in the European Union. Some have labelled it the core of the democratic order in Europe,¹ while others have seen it as an organ potentially threatening democracy by removing powers from national

democracies.² Furthermore, some see it as an effective organ for aggregating and expressing popular will, while others see it as an inefficient and badly administered parliament with limited representativity and low turnout.

Leaving these differences aside, most people would agree to two important changes in the role of the European Parliament. First, the formal *competences* of the European Parliament have increased. The European Parliament is no longer a parliament only in name, it also holds and uses several of the capacities of a proper parliament. Through treaty revisions and day-to-day activities, the formal and actual powers of the EP have changed. The increased use of the co-decision procedure has turned the EP into co-legislator in the EU and the resignation of the Santer Commission contributed to strengthen the role of the parliament in holding the executives accountable. An indicator of the increasing importance of the EP is the increasing number of interest groups and lobbyists directing their energy and efforts at influencing the European Parliament.

Secondly, the EP has changed its mode of acting and making *decisions*. The party groups in the European Parliament have become stronger and more organised. Voting in the EP can often be explained by a left-right cleavage, rather than following the territorial dimensions.³ In addition, the internal organisational structure of the EP has been overhauled and refined. The increased workload and responsibility for the EP has made into a “working parliament”, in which the different specialised committees play a prominent role in the handling and interpretation of issues. The EP with its wider formal competences, and its willingness to enter fields in which it has limited formal powers,

combined with the emerging party cleavages has renewed the political space in Europe and has also contributed to strengthening the role of representative institutions in the EU.

At the *domestic* level the national parliaments have also experienced significant changes since the signing of the EEA Agreement. Formally, national parliaments are cornerstones of European integration. National parliaments decide on the question of membership, they ratify treaty revisions and they also form the basis for the formation of cabinets, which are represented in the Council. However, the academic literature on the parliaments in the EU tell us that they have been the “losers “of European integration.⁴

The lost parliamentary influence follows from the EU model of governance, where the capacity to legislate has been delegated to the governments in the Council and the EP. The more legislative power delegated to the EU, the more the legislative competence of the national parliaments is weakened. From being active in legislating, the parliaments have been left with the tasks of instructing and holding the government accountable. The domestic budgetary politics is increasingly being affected by the EU, partly by the general economic guidelines and partly by the obligations stemming from EU policies. Finally, the toolbox of national parliaments has dwindled, since some instruments in governing political life have been ruled out. While the tasks of the national parliaments have been reduced, their responsibilities have increased. With a limited European public sphere, the national politicians are left with much of the responsibility for the politics, with limited possibilities of influencing it.

In order to *compensate* for these developments, national parliaments have initiated a series of reforms during the last decade. National parliaments have devoted more attention and resources to European affairs and they have increased their level of competence and skills. All countries have specific parliamentary committees for handling European affairs. Many parliaments have established documentary centres and translation services for assisting national parliaments in fulfilling their tasks. Some national parliaments have strengthened their relationship with members of the European parliament from their own countries. In addition, the last decade has seen a strengthening of inter parliamentary co-operation, in particular within the framework of COSAC. Although compensating measures have been initiated in most parliaments, there is not a distinct model or template. National parliaments have adopted and changed according to different constitutional rules and traditional roles.⁵

Consequently, we have experienced a decade of stepwise strengthening of the parliaments in the EU. From playing a marginal role in the governance of the EU, the European Parliament has been empowered and become one of the key institutions in governing Europe. In addition, the national parliaments have reformed themselves enabling them to play a more significant role in formulating and monitoring European politics.

The limited involvement of parliaments in the EEA

As we have seen, the EEA Agreement was signed in an era in which the parliaments did not play a prominent role in the EU. Symptomatically, the EFTA side was given access to

the initial stages of the policy process in the European Commission, but was given a limited role regarding the European Parliament. In the ratification process of the EEA Agreement, the role of parliaments in the EEA played a limited part. For instance, in Norway, barely a page of the 600-page main report was devoted to EEA and EFTA parliamentary co-operation.⁶

However, parliamentarians have always played a role in the EFTA. Historically, the most important framework for this has been the EFTA Parliamentary Committee. This Committee has a long history. It started meeting in 1963 and was formalised in 1977 as the Committee of Members of the Parliament of the EFTA countries. Regular meetings have taken place since 1981 between the EP and the Committee of Members of Parliament of EFTA countries. Since the implementation of the EEA Agreement, these relations have been institutionalised in the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee (EEA JPC).

The EFTA Parliamentary Committee

After the entry into force of the EEA Agreement, there have formally been two EFTA Parliamentary Committees: the Committee of Members of Parliament of the EFTA States (MPS) and the Committee of Members of Parliament of the EFTA Countries (CMP). Formally, the MPS deals with EEA-related matters and forms the EFTA side of the JPC, and the CMP deals with all other matters, especially relations with third countries. However, in practice these two Committees work as one, and all the members of the MPS are members of the CMP. The Committees have members from each EFTA country

recruited from the respective national parliaments. The MPS has six members from Norway, four from Iceland and two from Liechtenstein. Switzerland has observer status in the MPS.

In general, the Parliamentary Committee holds four meetings a year, in addition to the two customary meetings with the EFTA Ministers. The Committee is responsible for scrutinising the EFTA and securing some element of parliamentary control. It is also entitled to give statements on the budget for the EFTA Surveillance Authority. The Committee launches new initiatives for updating and furthering co-operation with the EU, as well as furthering co-operation with other states. For instance, the parliamentary committee has been eager to develop free trade agreements with other countries. The intensity of the meetings is dependent upon the activities of the members of the committee. In general, the most experienced and the representatives that are also in the bureau (the leader group) are the most active. Deliberation in the meetings does not follow party cleavages, but often follows different territorial boundaries. However, our investigations have showed that there are some differences between the Member States. For instance, while the Norwegian participants put emphasis on the importance of national co-ordination and unity, the Icelandic representatives put less emphasis on this matter.

The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee

The EFTA parliamentarians also engage in co-operation with the Members of the European parliament. Article 95 of the EEA Agreement establishes an EEA Joint

Parliamentary Committee. The Committee is composed of equal numbers of Members of the European Parliament and of members of parliaments of the EFTA States. The body consists of 12 representatives of the EEA EFTA side and 12 representatives of the EU side (European Parliament). The Committee meets twice a year, and the chairmanship rotates on a yearly basis between the European Parliament and the EFTA side. The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee alternately holds sessions in the European Parliament and in an EFTA State.

The purpose of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee is to contribute, through dialogue and debate, to a better understanding between the Community and the EFTA States in the fields covered by the EEA Agreement. The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee does not have any strong formal powers, but may express its views in the form of reports or resolutions, as appropriate. It, in particular, examines the annual report of the EEA Joint Committee, issued in accordance with Article 94 (4), on the functioning and the development of this Agreement. In addition, the President of the EEA Council may appear before the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee in order to be heard by it. The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee is free to adopt its own rules of procedure.

Since establishment, there has been a relatively stable activity in the Committee, as the table below demonstrates.

Table 1: EEA JPC meetings and reports/resolutions during 1998-2003

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Meetings	1	2	2	2	2	2
Reports/resolutions	4	6	5	4	4	4

Sources: Minutes from the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee meetings 1998-2003 (European Parliament) and EFTA Secretariat [Online].

The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee meetings have several features. First, the agenda of these meetings are set by developments and events in the EU, such as treaty revisions or other key decisions. Very rarely are issues on the agenda set by events in the EFTA States. Second, the deliberations in the JPC often refer to past EU events or decisions that have already been taken. The ex post structure of the Committee meetings makes these more valuable for information and updating for the EFTA parliamentarians than for the MEPs. However, there are some examples that the deliberations in the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee form feedback to the legislative processes in the EU. For instance, in the discussion on the use of the precautionary principle in food safety, some of the concerns of the Committee were found in the EU documents as well. Third, there is a slight asymmetry in the meetings. In general, the meetings are attended by four to six representatives of the EP and about 10 representatives of the EFTA side. Of course this asymmetry is only natural given the asymmetry between the EU and the EFTA and the structural bias in the EEA Agreement (where legislation in the EU passes to the EFTA States). The EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee has had some difficulties attracting

MEPs. Most of those involved in the JPC originate from countries that are formerly members of EFTA. However, the Committee has fortunately benefited from the strong personal involvement and interest in the EFTA States of MEPs such as Diana Wallis (UK), Erika Mann (D) and Gary Titley (UK) who have put importance and energy into fostering the co-operation. The informal workings of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee combined with the skills and personal involvement of the representatives is still able to produce significant results. For instance, it was on the initiative of Erika Mann that the Foreign Ministers of the EFTA States were invited to the European Parliament in March 2004

The value of the Committee is perhaps not its formal competences and powers, but its informal character and the network building that takes place in the setting provided by the meetings. At meetings, the informal character is stressed and ample time is allocated for lunches and discussions. Some politicians in the EU and EFTA also have contact between the meetings, but this is more limited. It is reasonable to say that the JPC is more important for the EFTA parliamentarians than it is for the MEPs. They find the co-operation fruitful and it provides them with information and knowledge about the developments in the EU and the EEA. This channel of information supplements the information provided to the national parliament by the national government. In addition, the channel provides some degree of autonomy. There are for instance few examples where a national government has tried to instruct the parliamentarians on the Committee to put forward distinct arguments. Also, members of the Committee from EFTA States also experience limited interest by their fellow parliamentarians at home. Few approach

them in order to ask them to address specific points or to bring up special issues. Hence, one could argue that the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee is an underutilised channel that has proved to be a valuable source of information and comprehension of the dynamics of European integration for those involved.

How national committees handle EU and EEA matters

Let us now examine how the national parliaments in the EEA have handled increased European integration. In the Icelandic Althingi, there is no such thing as a special committee for European affairs. The foreign affairs committee, one of the Althingi's 12 standing committees, is entrusted with all EEA matters. There has been no discussion recently on the establishment of such a special committee. We shall therefore limit our discussion to the role and activity in the EEA committee in the Norwegian parliament and compare it with that of the Swedish parliament's EU committee.

The establishment of national EU/EEA committees occurred somewhat simultaneously in the two countries. Both parliaments established their committees in the mid-1990s⁷ as a result of closer European integration. Both countries used the structure of the EU committee of the Danish parliament as a model, and copied elements of it. In the Swedish case, the parliament used the Danish model as its starting point, while the Norwegian parliament only used some elements of the model as inspiration.⁸

It is the Committee on Foreign/EEA Affairs that deals with the EC/EU legal acts in the Norwegian parliament. The Committee or its chairman may decide that one or more of the other standing committees in the Storting shall take part in specific consultations and questions. Contact with the rest of the Storting, its committees and representatives is limited.⁹ In general, the role of parliamentary involvement has not been a much disputed issue in Norway. As an illustration, the national parliamentary committees and the EFTA Parliamentary Committee were given limited attention in the report on the EEA published in 2001.¹⁰

There are some similarities regarding the formal structure in Sweden and Norway. The two committees are both co-operative bodies, linking the work of the government with the parliament. They also have a formal role of controlling and influencing the government's policies. However there are some important differences as to their mandates. In Sweden, the primary role and competence of the EU committee is to mandate the government and its policy in the EU.¹¹ The mandate is not legally but politically binding.¹² In Norway, the representatives may state their opinions, but there is no voting in the committee. Nor is the government obliged to follow the opinions stated in this body. The government may make its own conclusions before the meetings in Brussels.¹³

The table below outlines some of the most striking differences between the actual practices of the two parliamentary committees.

Table 2: The Swedish Riksdag's EU committee and the Norwegian Storting's EEA committee: number of meetings, cases, and average meeting duration (1997-2003).

Country	Parliamentary period							
	Data	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	Total
The Swedish EU committee	Meetings	40	33	34	39	43	33	222
	Cases	- ¹⁾	- ²⁾	104	122	124	101	451
	Average meeting duration	206min	136min	161min	157min	133min	171min	161min
The Norwegian EEA committee	Meetings	8	9	9	9	9	7	51
	Cases	16	22	27	21	19	17	122
	Average meeting duration	40min	45min	53min	67min	48min	33min	48min

Source: EU committee and EEA committee minutes (Melsæther, 2004:102, table 6.1). Note: 1) and 2): data from 1997-98 and 1998-99 on cases has not been made available by the Riksdag.

Table 2 shows the limited parliamentary involvement in European affairs in Norway. The Swedish committee meets on a weekly basis, normally every Friday, but with no meetings in August. The Norwegian committee meets every month, normally on Tuesdays. The Swedish EU committee holds on average 37 meetings per year compared

to 8.5 in Norway. It had a total of 171 meetings more than its Norwegian counterpart in the period 1997-2003.

The Swedish Riksdag holds longer meetings and more deliberations. On average, the Norwegian committee's meetings lasted for 48 minutes compared to 161 minutes in the Swedish Riksdag, i.e., almost two hours longer than those of the Norwegian EEA committee. There is also a noteworthy difference in the level of debate at the meetings. In Norway, there is a lower level of activity and fewer representatives engaging in the discussions. By contrast, in Sweden, activity is more intense and more people are involved in the discussions. These differences in the duration of the meetings are not necessarily a reflection of the fact that Swedes have many more cases on the agenda for discussion. The average meeting in Sweden has approximately 3 cases per meeting, while there are 2.4 cases per meeting in Norway.

These figures indicate that the Swedish EU committee is much more actively involved in EU affairs than the Norwegian EEA committee. A high level of activity, combined with a de facto binding mandate in Sweden, portray a committee with considerable power and influence on the European policy of the Swedish government. By contrast, the Norwegian EEA committee has few formal powers and is characterised by a low level of activity and interest among its members. These observations support the conclusions in an earlier study of the Norwegian parliament in the period 1994-1996, documenting the lack of activity in the Norwegian parliament regarding EEA issues.¹⁴

There are similar discrepancies between the administrative capacities of the Swedish and Norwegian parliamentary committees. In Sweden, the parliaments have considerable administrative support. The EU committee has its own secretariat with a staff of 9 and its own press secretary. In Norway, the EEA committee does not have its own secretariat and uses the Foreign Committee's secretariat. In Iceland, there are no earmarked resources for translation or secretarial assistance, and the MPs rely upon the ordinary capacities of the Althingi for EEA matters.

There are also differences regarding transparency and publication of the minutes. In Sweden, the general rule is that minutes are made publicly available after two weeks. In Norway, they are kept secret for one year. In Iceland, the minutes from the Foreign affairs committee meetings are kept confidential for 30 to 80 years, while those from meetings of other standing committees are open to the public once the committee has closed a case.

The parliaments also play different roles in stimulating the general public debate on Europe. The Swedish parliament, its representatives and party groups play an active role in spreading information, partly together with a well organised EU information centre and good and informative Internet sites. In Norway, the spread of information from the parliament is quite limited. Rather than being institutionalised with earmarked resources, the spread of information is dependent upon the initiatives of the individual representatives.

As seen, there are significant differences between the Swedish and the Norwegian parliaments. Recent initiatives in Sweden suggest that this gap might increase further. During the spring of 2004, a parliamentary working group made proposals for the reform of the handling of EU questions. Although a decision has not yet been made, there is a shared view and strong support for strengthening the parliamentary capacity.

There are at least two explanations for these differences.

The first argument is structural: due to different ties to the EU, there will be different degrees of parliamentary involvement. Sweden is a member of the Union, while Norway is an EEA member. One should expect that the EU Member States should be more involved and engaged in European politics, due to the extent and intensity of the co-operation. This is of course true. However, one should be cautious not to overemphasise this difference. The EEA Agreement is an extensive agreement that covers considerable areas of EU co-operation. Nevertheless, it could well be that the asymmetry of the EEA Agreement, which gives few real possibilities for national parliamentary involvement, reduces interest in and desire for national parliamentary involvement.

Secondly these differences are the result of deliberate decisions. It is reasonable to argue that the majority of the representatives of the Norwegian parliament have decided to be inattentive, for many years, to the subject handling of EU/EEA questions. However, some representatives from some parties have put forward proposals for alternative structures to better cope with the increased European integration and information load. Proposals to

reform parliamentary involvement have not gained support. In addition, there have been few attempts to grant financial and other resources to increase the parliament's involvement in EEA affairs.

The risk of an increasing gap

As we have seen, there is a mismatch between the strengthening role of parliaments and parliamentarians within the EU and the more limited role played by the representative institutions in the EEA Agreement, signed at a time when parliaments were sidelined in the EU. However, during the last decade, there has been a steady increase in the formal powers and actual capacities of the European Parliament as well as in the national parliaments in the EU.

This parliamentary dynamism has no parallel in the EEA. However, as we have seen, parliamentary co-operation within the framework of the EEA Agreement is valuable. It is an important source of information and a forum for informal exchange and networking. Nevertheless, the activities and actual working of the parliamentary co-operation is vulnerable, since it is strongly dependent upon the will and capacity of individuals. In the EFTA countries, there is also less involvement of the national parliaments. Compared to the parliament of for instance Sweden, the national parliaments in EFTA countries have fewer formal competences, capacities and willingness to engage in European affairs.

It is likely that this gap between the role played by parliaments in the EU and the EFTA States will increase rather than decrease. The EU Constitutional Treaty sets out several

important suggestions for strengthening national parliamentary influence in the EU. In preparing the new constitution, the role of national parliaments has been at the centre of the discussions. For the first time national parliamentarians were invited to participate in the drafting of an EU treaty and the role of the national parliaments was explicitly listed as one of the main topics for discussion.

A working group in the Convention was devoted to reforming the role of national parliaments in European governance. Four initiatives are included in the constitution. First, strengthening the possibilities of national parliaments to influence lawmaking in the EU. The adopted Constitution suggests that national parliaments should be given proper information, be included in the hearing processes and the introduction of a 'deadline' for decision-making in the EU, allowing time for national parliaments to be consulted and to instruct their national governments. Second, strengthening the possibilities of national parliaments to hold their national governments accountable in European affairs. The most important instrument for securing this is increased transparency in the Council and the right of national parliaments to receive transcripts from the meetings within ten days, at the same time as the national governments receive them. Third, increasing the role of national parliaments in influencing the general developments of the EU. The Constitution suggests that national parliaments should have the possibility to monitor the application of the subsidiarity principle, and to allow a coalition of national parliaments to block new initiatives if they are in conflict with the principle. Finally, the draft suggests that national parliaments should strengthen their co-operation and that COSAC should play a more

important role in facilitating co-operation and mutual learning by spreading ‘best practice’ among national parliaments.

These proposals, if accepted and implemented, are likely to further strengthen the role of national parliaments in the EU. The initiatives build upon and strengthen the trend of empowering parliamentary influence in the EU. It remains to be seen whether national parliaments will be eager to exploit their new rights and seek to explore new ones. Furthermore, it is of course disputed whether these initiatives will close the democratic deficit in the EU, but they will obviously help reduce it.

Nevertheless, for the EFTA States these developments are challenging. Within the EEA Agreement, there are no possibilities for providing equivalent capacities and roles for the national parliaments. This has led the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee to recently express its concern. The Committee “notes the slightly increased role of national parliaments in the legislative process on the EU side, noting the lack of a corresponding function for the EEA EFTA States on their side, and calls on their national parliaments to consider ways of achieving similar checks on the principle of subsidiarity concerning EEA legislation” (EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee 2003). However, it is difficult to see how such arrangements can be made within the current framework without a strong political initiative and a more significant upgrade of the EEA Agreement.

¹ Prodi, Romano (2000). *Speech to the European Parliament*

² Lord, Christopher (1998). *Democracy in the European Union*. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press

³ Hix, Simon (2000). *Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the EU - An Application of the NOMINATE to the Post-1999 European Parliament, One Europe or Several*

⁴ Smith, Eivind, Ed. (1996). *National Parliaments as Cornerstones of European Integration*. London, Kluwer Law Internationa. Maurer, Andreas and Wolfgang Wessels, Eds. (2001). *National Parliaments on their Ways to Europe: Losers or Latecomers?* Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.

⁵ Maurer, Andreas and Wolfgang Wessels, Eds. (2001). *National Parliaments on their Ways to Europe: Losers or Latecomers?* Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft

⁶ St.prp.nr.100 (1991-92). *Om samtykke til ratifikasjon av avtale om Det europeiske Økonomiske Samarbeidsområde (EØS), undertegnet i Oporto 2.mai*

⁷ In Sweden, the EU committee (EU-nämnden) was established on 1 January 1995 and the EEA committee in Norway (EØS-utvalget) was established on 6 May 1994.

⁸ Melsæther, Jan Kåre (2004). *Valgt likegyldighet. Organiseringen av europapolitisk informasjon i Stortinget og Riksdagen*. *Instituttet for Statsvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo*.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ St.meld.nr.27 (2001-2002). *Om EØS-samarbeidet 1994-2001*. Oslo, Utenriksdepartementet.

¹¹ Melsæther, Jan Kåre (2004). *Valgt likegyldighet. Organiseringen av europapolitisk informasjon i Stortinget og Riksdagen*. *Instituttet for Statsvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo*.

¹² However there have been discussions among scholars and in the Swedish parliament about the EU committee and its mandate: whether it is only politically and/or legally binding. It seems to be clear that the government is obliged to follow the opinions stated by and in the committee. See: Christensen, Dag Arne (1997): *Europautvalva i Danmark, Sverige og Noreg: Sandpåstrøingsorgan eller politiske muldvarper*, Nordisk Administrativt Tidsskrift, Vol. 78, Nr. 2: 143-162. Hegeland, Hans and Mattson, Ingvar (1997): *The Swedish Riksdag and the EU: Influence and Openness*, in Matti Wiberg (red.) *Trying to Make Democracy Work. The Nordic Parliaments and the European Union*, The Bank of Sweden Tercentary Foundation & Gidlunds Förlag. Förslag til Riksdagen (2000/01): *Riksdagens arbete med EU frågor kap 6*, i förslag til Riksdagen 2000/01:RS1 Riksdagen inför 2000-tallet. Melsæther, Jan Kåre (2004). *Valgt likegyldighet. Organiseringen av europapolitisk informasjon i Stortinget og Riksdagen*. *Instituttet for Statsvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo*.

¹³ Myhre-Jensen, Kjell and Fløistad, Brit (1997). "The Storting and the EU/EEA." in Wiberg, Matti (ed.) "Trying to Make Democracy Work. The Nordic Parliaments and the European Union". The Bank of Sweden Tercentary Foundation & Gidlunds Förlag

¹⁴ Nordby, Trond og Veggeland, Frode (1999): "Lovgivningsmyndighetens suspensjon. Stortingets rolle under EØS-avtalen", *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning*, Vol. 40: 87-109