



PRESS RELEASE
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New CER working paper

THE CASE FOR A STRONGER EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

By Lousewies van der Laan

The EU urgently needs a stronger and reformed European Parliament (EP). With 60 per cent of all legislation affecting citizens' lives discussed in Brussels, EU decision-making must become more democratic.

In this new CER working paper Lousewies van der Laan analyses the current democratic failings of the EU – and sets out a cohesive agenda for reform. The simplest improvements which the authors proposes are those the EP can undertake by itself, without a treaty change. Every day that Parliament neglects to improve its effectiveness and image is a day lost for the EU's legitimacy.

Therefore the European Parliament should:

- ★ reform its internal workings to make debates more interesting;
- ★ publish minutes of committee meetings and votes so that citizens can track what has happened in their name;
- ★ devise a strict statute for its members and staff, ending fraud and exploitation; and
- ★ establish a subsidiarity committee to throw out superfluous legislation at an early stage.

Internal EP reform is necessary but not sufficient. European governments must play their part by agreeing to the necessary treaty changes. The current negotiations on an EU constitution provide a unique opportunity for reform.

Van der Laan proposes the following measures:

- ★ The EP must have the powers to amend and reject all EU legislative proposals;
- ★ The whole EU budget must come under control of the EP;
- ★ The EP should control expenditure but also have the right to raise revenue;
- ★ The EU should set up an assembly of MEPs and MPs to amend the Commission's annual work programme;
- ★ EU citizens should directly elect the Commission President; and
- ★ The EP should have a single seat in Brussels, ending the wasteful travelling circus to Strasbourg.

Notes for editors:

1. Lousewies van der Laan is a member of the Dutch parliament and deputy leader of the Dutch Liberal Democratic Party D66. From 1999-2003 she was a Member of the European Parliament for D66.

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