

Determinants of stability and cohesion of Polish delegation to the European Parliament Description

The first decade of Poland's presence in the European Union has been a period of dynamic growth in the importance of the European Parliament. At the same time there are few institutions characterised by so much divergence between superficial knowledge about them and political realities.

The objectives of the research include the following: 1. Determining the stability (changeability) of the Polish delegation to the EP, i.e. changes with respect to the presence of particular political parties (exchange of parties) or particular individuals (exchange of MEPs); 2. Determining the ideological, programme, and operational cohesion of the Polish political parties within the political groups of the EP in the years 2004-2019, i.e. to what extent a given party's declared values and programmes are consistent with the values and programme of the whole political group (e.g. Civic Platform (PO) within the European People's Party, Law and Justice (PiS) within the European Conservatives and Reformists).

Within the scope of the project, the following four hypotheses have been formulated: 1) The political stability level of the Polish parties present in the EP is determined not only by the results of EP elections but also by the results of parliamentary elections in Poland; 2) The compositional stability level of the Polish parties present in the EP depends on the model of appointing candidates for MEPs; 3) The Polish parties' ideological and programme cohesion within their respective EP party groups is conditioned by the ideological and programme differences among the members of a particular party group; 4) the more pro-European a given Polish political party is, the closer its programme and voting decisions are to those of the other parties within a given EP party group.

In principle, the following five research methods will be used: 1) A quantitative analysis of party programmes based on a comparison of key words and sentences occurring in the programmes of the Polish political parties and the other European parties belonging to the same political groups; 2) Voting cohesion will be examined by a quantitative comparison of the votes of the Polish political parties and the other parties belonging to the same political groups; 3) A qualitative analysis of election programmes based on a comparison and analysis of the content of such documents; 4) An expert panel and an expert survey, i.e. a debate with the participation of, and a questionnaire to be completed by, political experts; 5) In-depth interviews with MEPs and former MEPs.

The project will contribute to the better understanding of the impact of political parties on the process of European integration and the impact of Europeanisation on political parties. It will help to understand better the activities undertaken by the Polish political parties in the transnational environment as well as the mechanisms of the shaping of the European political space. It will identify the possibilities of increasing the legitimacy of European policy. Acquired research results will also facilitate an answer to the question about a degree to which decisions and votes taken by MEPs are determined by their belonging to the particular political groups within the EP and whether differences observed among the programmes and ideologies of the Polish parties present in the EP are similar to those observed in the Polish Parliament.