

Democratic Implications of the Treaty of Lisbon

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Abstract

How did the Treaty of Lisbon fare in addressing the EU's democratic deficit? The main criticism regarding the democratic implications of European integration pre-Lisbon is epitomized by the concern that merely lumping together various channels or mechanisms of democratic representation and public control will not necessarily result in adequate democratic representation. Instead, poorly coordinated organs may interfere with, and undermine, one another. I examine the degree to which the Treaty of Lisbon improves or worsens the democratic deficit by analyzing the reforms made with reference to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Council, and national parliaments. With respect to the European Parliament, the article focuses on the alleged disconnect between MEPs and the electorate, and the implications of ordinary legislative procedures on the legislative pattern and legislative behavior of the EP. With regards to the Council and the European Council, attention is directed toward the gatekeeping functions of national executives in light of the prevalence of trilogues and

the newly created position of the President of the European Council. Also, the early warning mechanism and the principle of subsidiarity provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon are examined as significant issues for national parliaments. The analysis indicates that the Treaty of Lisbon has failed to improve the EU's democratic deficit to any significant extent.

Key Words: European Union, Treaty of Lisbon, democratic deficit, trilogues, subsidiarity, ordinary legislative procedure