

# The EP as a constant promoter of gender equality: another European myth?

**Kosmos workshop HU Berlin, 29 February 2016**

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## 2. The EP as a champion for gender equality

- Foundational myth?
- Every strengthening welcomed by feminist activists and scholars

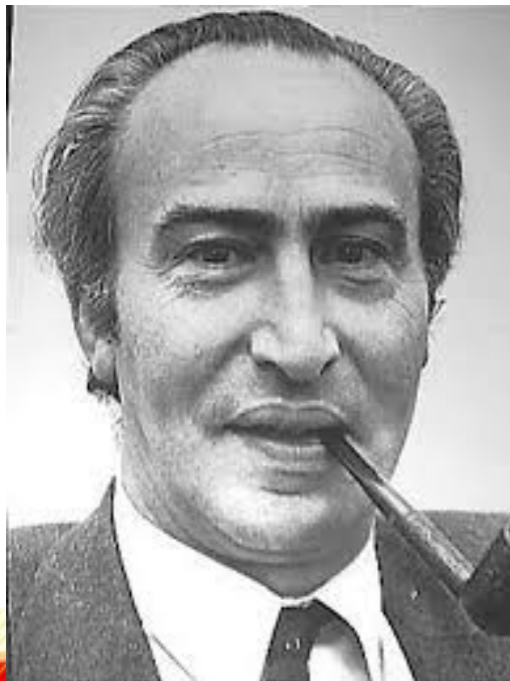
But

- Not recognized by women in the EU (Eurobarometer)
- Puzzling
  - EP no discussion and disagreement on gender equality?
  - Institutional changes (decision making power; increase member states)

1. Facts – 3 phases
2. explanations

### 3. First phase, 1957-1978: a supranational assembly with national parliamentarians

- Agendasetting ⇨ resolutions (eg. maternity protection, equal treatment)
- Implementation ⇨ Article 119, equal pay ⇨ resolutions
- Decision making ⇨ advisory role



Henk Vredeling, Cornelis Berkhouwer, Astrid Lulling

## 4. 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, 1979-1991, directly elected supranational advisory body



Yvette Roudy  
Hanja Maij-Weggen



## 5. 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, 1992-2015, a real parliament?

- Treaty of Maastricht , 1992
  1. Social partners
  2. Cooperation procedure
  3. Hearings of candidate-Commissioners
  
- Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997
  1. Codecision and QMV
  2. Extended treaty base: GMS, non-discrimination, human rights

But shift away from legislative action to soft law and rankings

- Budgetary powers

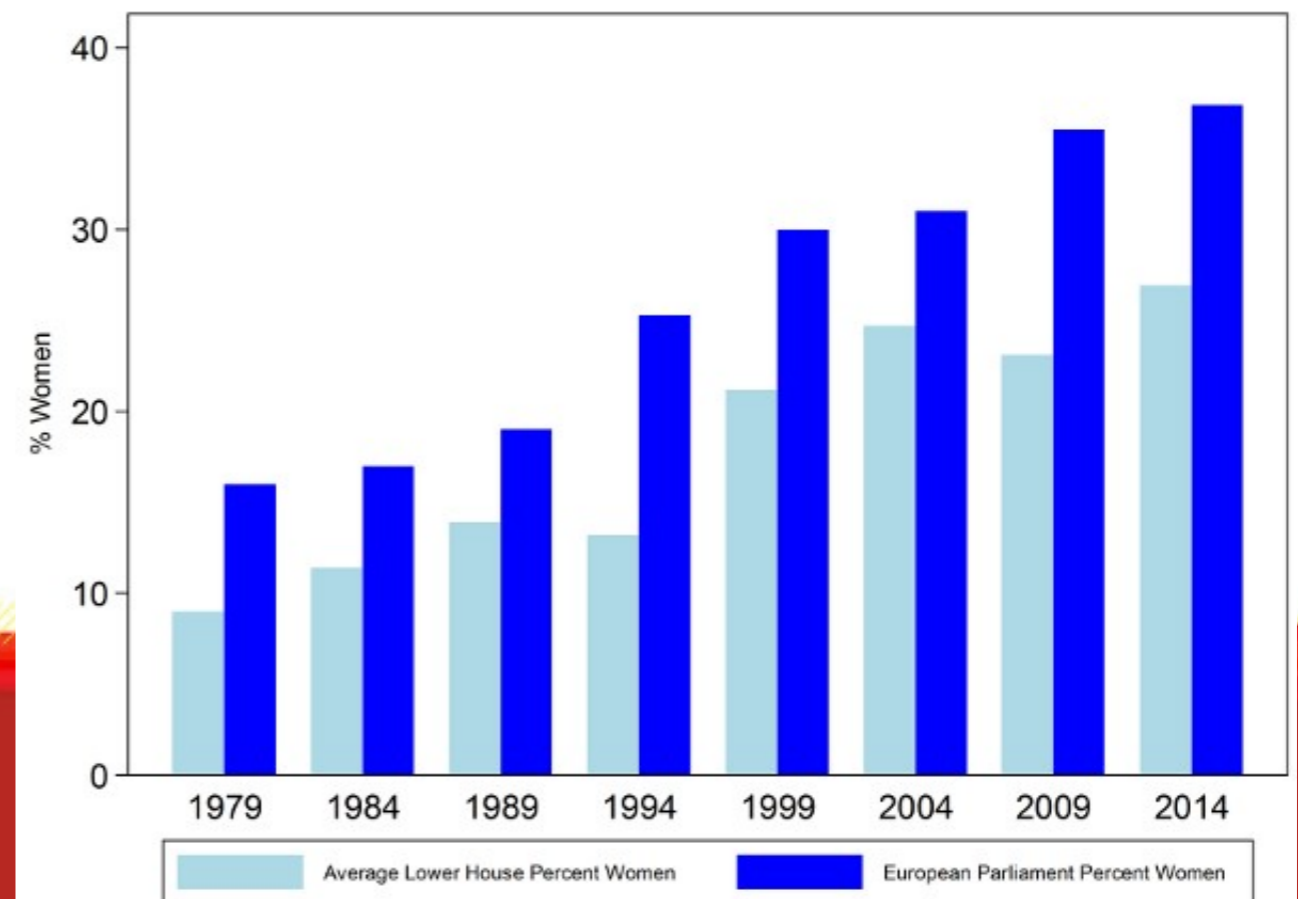
## 6. Another European myth?

- EP or FEMM?
- Patterns detected
- But: how to explain these patterns?

## 7. Possible explanations

### 1. High number of women MEPs?

- Yes, but how come?
  - 'Only women represent women's interests'
  - No agreement between liberal –
  - Christian democrat – traditional/conservative – social democrat
- fe/male MEPs



## 8. Further possible explanations

### 2. Newness of the institution

- Window of opportunity
- Search for legitimacy

### 3. Transnational pressure and a velvet triangle

- Committed individuals (mainly women)
- Personal contacts across positions and levels of governance

A myth? No, a fact – but not cast in stone

- Status FEMM
- Position EP

