

Position Paper

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Name	
Committee	AFCO
Topic	Is the solution to the Eurocrisis 'more europe' Or less? With the aftermath of the financial crisis dragging on for longer and longer, what institutional reforms are required to deal with the current political stalemate?

Not only do we need “more Europe” we need better Europe. Across the years the EU has provided many benefits for its members. The single market, whilst a work in progress, is still a major improvement; allowing freer trade and reducing red tape. We have the European human rights have avoided internal wars and have had major roles in formulating international trade agreement. Although in recent years are economic strength has weakened we still carry considerable clout in international negotiations. The power and influence of the EU as a single body is far greater than the individual power of its member states.

Saying this, the common currency has in recent years has caused to some extent our current economic situation, with too many countries possessing a currency that does not fit the state of their economy and no longer have the powers to devalue their currency to increase the competitiveness of their currency plunging them further into debt. Debts which they also procured by easy access to cheap credit that their economies could never pay back. As their debts increase the more productive countries are reluctant to use their citizen’s money to pay to bail out a country who they cannot guarantee have any way of paying it back. One solution is increased union, with an EU body overseeing and dictating all budgets. This in effect would take power away from national governments and dissolve it to the EU and, more specifically the ECB. However this solution does not take into account the growing disparity and lack of connection many European citizens feel in regards to the EU.



The task is to convince member states that a united Europe is far stronger than a collection of small states with only the name of a continent to connect them. Too many countries believe themselves still to be major stake holders in the global landscape and do not see that the world around them has changed and they are not as strong as they once were. It is important that European citizens understand that it is the EU, and not their individual member states (regardless of their size) which will give them the most in terms of a global say.

But in order to get this message across first it is important to tackle the growing despondency towards Europe. It would seem obvious that the first step in empowering these despondent ranks is to increase the European citizens role in decision making. One of the options open is increasing the role of the European parliament in the decision making process. The European Parliament separates national identity from the equation and is more focused on ideology of European citizens than the council of ministers. However, we cannot think of giving more power to the European parliament until it has gained more in the way of democratic legitimacy. Voter turnout for elections to the European parliament is low, steadily decreasing from an average of 62% in 1979 to an average in 2009 of 43%. Until voter turnout is addressed the European parliament lacks democratic legitimacy and increasing its position would only fuel Eurosceptics' opinions that the EU is a tyrannous organisation. If we can increase voter turnout, by making it compulsory or by better advertising it then we can start to increase its legislative powers and strengthen its role in voting through legislation beyond that held by the council of ministers. However it seems wholly unlikely that the council of minister and their national governments, especially those of the "Big Four", will be particularly willing to devolve their power within the EU lightly.

