Chapter 7

Politicians beyond the Nation State?

From the League of Nations to the European Union

Pasi Ihalainen, Teemu Häkkinen, Anna Kronlund and Olivier Rozenberg

Diplomats have crossed borders throughout history, whereas statesmen and politicians have traditionally been seen as acting in national contexts, even if often with a particular focus on foreign policy. Internationally oriented actors before the First World War were often colonial agents or political thinkers. As a result of the emergence of new forms of international cooperation, the development of international law and the rise of language of the 'international' in the course of the nineteenth century, forums of political action extending beyond nation-states started to emerge. In the confines of a variety of international organisations, career diplomats as well as representatives of nation-states (who typically had seats in national parliaments as well) started to meet, becoming international politicians in an analytical sense while continuing to represent national public spheres at the international level. This rising inter- and transnational interaction created spaces in which an understanding of international politics and by implication self-designations of international political actors might have become possible. The concept of a parliamentary politician had been more widely adopted in European national contexts during the nineteenth century, but were such discursive steps outside the confines of national politics actually taken?

Aristocratic international networks have a long history. Yet Evgeny Roschin (2017: 179, 186) has argued that the concept of 'international community' first emerged during the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 as academics and diplomats planned international institutions. Recognising previous international sociability, we take the so-called Wilsonian moment

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602.
It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

in the aftermath of the catastrophic First World War as a point of departure as new international arenas were then created to secure peace. This was a turning point in the sense that an older understanding of European politics searching for a balance between powers was challenged by ideas of politics being possible also beyond the level of nation-states and by the ideal of parliamentary control of foreign policy within nation-states. We investigate whether, when and to what extent conceptualisations of international as opposed to merely national political actors or representatives emerged – keeping in mind that such self-designations would complement and not replace the role of a representative of a nation-state.

To trace related conceptualisations, we analyse debates in a selection of national and international assemblies, viewing the participants as potentially defining themselves or being described by fellow participants as political actors in an international context – and thus as more than delegates of national governments or parliaments. Our analytical focus is on the meanings assigned to the terms 'international' or 'European' and 'politician' or 'statesman' by these actors in cases where these terms were entangled. Alternative self-designations such as 'parliamentarians', 'representatives' and 'delegates' are also considered. What kinds of ideas did the political actors associate with their work at an international forum? How did they present themselves when reporting on international activities in national forums? Who did they claim to be representing, and did they understand that they were extending their sphere of action from national politics to inter-, trans- and supranational levels? Did that require different qualities from them? Such an extension potentially changed their understanding of national politics as well. As for the public image of international political actors, it has been necessary to limit the analysis to examples from national parliaments and the European Parliament, media debates falling beyond the scope of this exploration.

In the following four sections we address (i) discursive reflections of international political actors in the aftermath of the First World War in the context of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the League of Nations as well as the self-designations and reception of such actors in national parliaments in the 1920s; (ii) international political actors in and around the United Nations especially in the late 1940s, with focus on the institution as explicit conceptualisations of international political actors were rare; (iii) the Council of Europe since the late 1940s as a new attempt for international representation, reflected by the first explicit conceptualisations of a 'European politician'; and (iv) supranational political actors in the context of European integration, with some key institutional reforms since the late 1970s contributing to the recognition of some – albeit rare – European politicians. We have selected forums and organisations that reflect both more

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

global opportunities for conceptualising the role of an international political actor (the United Nations), but also more regional discussions from the most advanced (European) regional organisations of the era. Undoubtedly, conceptualisations by European politicians (on which this volume regarding European conceptual history is focused) have tended to remain Eurocentric (see also Ihalainen and Holmila 2022).

In particular cases, debates in national parliaments help to explore the politics-vocabulary used with reference to internationally oriented political actors. We focus on legislatures in Britain, France, Germany and the United States that represent very different understandings of the international context in the post-First World War situation. These understandings ranged from securing the British Empire to the primacy of national security in France, feelings of betrayal by the Western powers in Germany and willingness to stay outside of new international organisations in the United States. We make some use of distant-reading possibilities provided by the comparative People & Parliament interface. Computer-assisted quantification is applied for an overall view of trends in discourse on internationally oriented political actors and for locating instances for contextualising text analysis.

Overview of Associations between 'Politician' and 'International' in Parliamentary Speaking: UK as Example

It is important to recognise the relative marginality of discourses of the international in conceptualisations of the politician as a representative. Links between the attributes 'international' and 'European' with the terms 'politician' and 'statesman' have remained relatively weak in parliamentary discourse throughout European parliamentary history. The two attributes have mostly been associated with entirely different topics and especially the primacy of nation-states (or an empire) in conceptualisations of the sphere of the politician. A rising number of associations can be observed in the early twentieth century though, and by the end of the century the number of international or European political actors had increased, which makes related conceptualisations worth exploring further. Uses of the alternative expression 'global' started to appear every now and then after the Second World War, and 'transnational' since the 1970s. The frequencies of both rose only around the millennium, but neither term was commonly associated with politicians (People & Parliament: UK, France, Germany).

For an overview of the extent to which the terms 'politician' or 'statesman' and 'imperial', 'colonial', 'Commonwealth', 'international' or 'European' were entangled in the British parliament, a search was carried out with

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

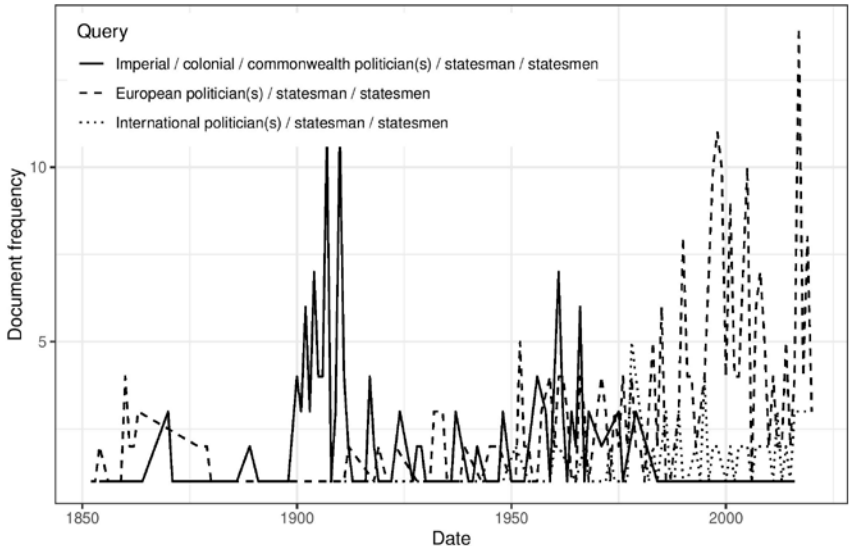

Figure 7.1. Document frequencies of the bigrams 'imperial/colonial/commonwealth politician*/statesm*', 'European politician*/statesm*' and 'international politician*/statesm*' in the speech field of the debates from both Houses of the British parliament in 1850–2020. Source: People & Parliament, UK corpus. Visualisation created by Berit Janssen, Utrecht University, reproduced with permission.

the neighbouring-words tool of the People & Parliament interface, so that all word combinations (bigrams) with 'politician' and 'statesman' were considered. The relatively rare co-occurrences are presented as absolute frequencies in Figure 7.1, illustrating how discourses on imperial, colonial or Commonwealth political actors were first complemented with European and international ones, especially in the interbellum, and finally replaced by European politicians – until the Brexit Referendum (2016).

The word politician appeared in the context of international affairs in the aftermath of the founding of the League of Nations (1919) and again during the international crises of the 1930s. Some combinations of 'politician/statesman' and 'European/international' are also traceable, complementing national and imperial understandings of politics (Figure 7.1). References to inter-parliamentary cooperation have offered an alternative way to talk about international political activities in parliamentary contexts. While discourse on 'inter-parliamentary' existed, it would become much more common after the Second World War and especially in the 2000s (Figure 7.2). European integration would also increase combinations of 'politician' and 'European' or 'international', though these remained rare in the British case.

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

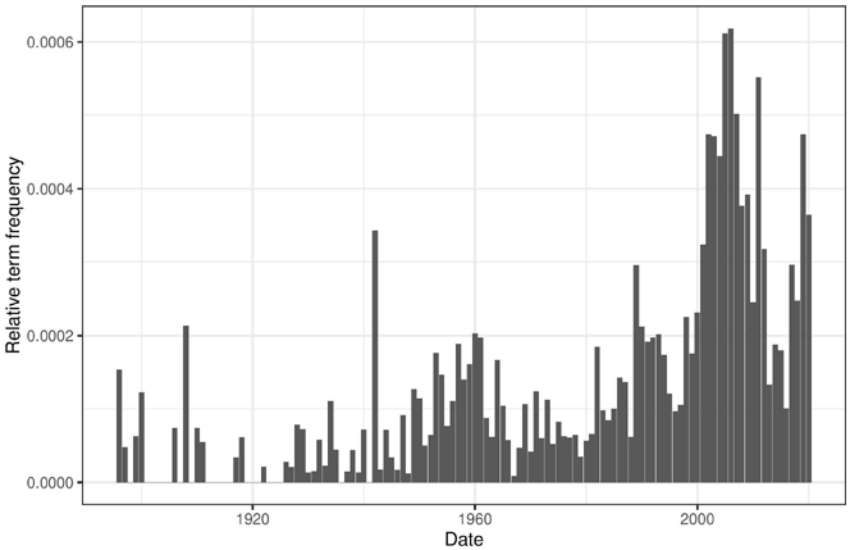

Figure 7.2. Relative term frequency of 'inter-parliamentary' in the debates of both Houses of the British parliament, 1889–2020. Source: People & Parliament, UK corpus, relative term frequency normalised by documents. Visualisation created by Berit Janssen, Utrecht University, reproduced with permission.

A Window of Opportunity for International Political Actors in the 1920s

The late nineteenth century had constituted a period of expanding international interaction surrounding trade, the creation of institutions for international law, and the rise of an international imaginary that included visions of a united Europe living in peace. The language of the 'international' had expanded to include the idiom 'international politics' (Marjanen and Ros 2022). The gradual strengthening of international activities in the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna (Vick 2014; Sluga 2021) and discourses on the international and the national remained closely entangled. As a variety of activities were conceptualised as national, it was easier to imagine the international as well. Paradoxically, internationalisation reinforced the conception of nation-states as the leading actors of international politics, supporting the construction of national identities. The attribute 'international' and especially the ideologically charged term 'internationalism' were politicised as international questions were often controversial. Moreover, the labour and women's movements challenged the traditional concept of representation, the secrecy of diplomacy, and the established class and gender order (though seldom the nation-states as such), calling for cross-national solidarity (see

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

Chapter 8 on activism). Non-socialists typically associated internationalism with revolutionary socialism (Ihalainen and Leonhard 2022; Kettunen 2022; Kinnunen 2022; Marjanen and Ros 2022). Ideas of international representation were mainly put forward in socialist circles. Hence an international political actor was often seen by contemporaries as a revolutionary socialist.

More institutional arenas for international politics were emerging. The gradual democratisation of parliaments and the parliamentarisation of governments at the national level supported the application of parliamentary procedures to emerging international assemblies. In the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), created in 1889, MPs from national parliaments met regularly to discuss ways to advance peace, applying parliamentary procedures and building transnational connections that were reported back to national parliaments. National parliaments typically selected MPs representing the political diversity of the parliament for a delegation to the IPU. The IPU constituted a forum for parliamentary diplomacy 'made up of national groups' and 'set up in parliaments by men and women inspired by an international ideal' (*Développement de l'Union*, IPU, August 1927: 92) so already its ability to increase transnational understanding had obvious limits. Nevertheless, regarding the interwar era, Martin Albers has seen IPU members as 'agents of international civil society' and 'individual activists for international cooperation' in search of 'a world parliament' (2012: 190–94).

Some IPU members felt a need to revolutionise institutions, minds and customs for the sake of 'the international life of the future', as Theodor Adelsvärd, the president of the IPU put it in 1921 (IPU, 17 August 1921: 146–47). Yet the participants might still be addressed just as 'parliamentarians from around the world' (Heinrich Mataja, IPU, 28 August 1922: 201) with no implications of representation beyond nation-states. When updating its statutes, the IPU defined itself as uniting 'in a common action the members of all parliaments formed into national groups for the purpose of securing the cooperation of their respective states to the strengthening and democratic development of an association of nations' (IPU, August 1922: 254–55). The organisation was seen as no more than 'an emanation of parliaments, and we seek in our respective parliaments to advance ideas of general interest' (Henri La Fontaine, an international lawyer and the president of the International Peace Bureau, IPU, 28 August 1922: 282), which ruled out any idea of independent international parliamentary politicians. At the national level, by contrast, the members were seen to act as 'patriots', 'party-men' and elected 'hommes politiques' (Ferdinand Buisson, IPU, August 1922: 367). These 'hommes politiques de près trente pays différents' (or, alternatively, 'les hommes d'Etat . . . de tous les pays', IPU, August 1921: 151, translated into English usually as 'statesmen' and rarely

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

as 'politicians' and into German either as 'Politiker' or 'Staatsmänner'; see Chapter 5 for interwar debates) constituted 'le parlement international' only in the sense of being national delegates or representatives (Laust Moltesen, IPU, 17 August 1923: 360). In the IPU debates of the 1920s, this vocabulary of statesmen and politicians was mainly used to refer to actors in or for countries, peoples and nation-states rather than to the international community. These were the object of representation, just in an international context: the IPU was 'an assembly of men [*sic*] who reflect the real life of different countries and whose main mission is to translate into texts, laws, the economic and political realities that govern a people at a given time' (Constant Georgesco, IPU, 27 August 1927: 315).

The conference of 1924 was exceptional in its international outlook. The IPU Bureau then envisioned a union within which 'a free body of politicians [*hommes politiques*]' would deliberate and 'exert an increasingly decisive influence on international politics [*la politique internationale*]' (Rapport du Bureau, IPU, 25 August 1924: 141). The French pacifist Lucien Le Foyer even proposed a new type or representation in 'the International Parliament . . . directly appointed by the peoples, by universal suffrage, and who be answerable to their respective governments' (IPU, 25 August 1924: 427). Furthermore, Walther Schücking, professor of public international law, thanked the organiser for enjoying 'an international reputation as a politician [*Politiker*]' (IPU, 25 August 1924: 423). Yet by 1930 it was generally recognised that the aim of becoming a 'World Parliament' or a 'House of Commons' of the League of Nations had not been reached (George Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, IPU, 16 July 1930: 238).

Alongside the IPU, a representative assembly was created for the League of Nations, convening from 1920. In this assembly, delegates selected by national governments, often experts in international relations, encountered each other in a multinational context, combining diplomatic negotiations, expert competences and deliberation. The records of the Assembly reveal the lack of an established concept of an international politician among these representatives of nation-states: in ceremonial speeches, 'représentatifs' and 'hommes d'Etat' were the terms used to address the attendees, the reference being to their nation-states (Giuseppe Motta, LON, 1 September 1924: 30). While the expectations of 'the international public opinion' regarding the debates of the Assembly was emphasised (Alberto Guani, LON, 5 September 1927: 28), awareness of the limited possibilities of the representatives were recognised (Momtchilo Nintchitch, LON, 25 September 1926: 143). The agenda did bring up international tensions, the participants viewing themselves as representatives of their peoples but hardly presenting their activities as those of political actors whose interests, duties and activities would

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

have extended beyond their respective nation-states – despite all rhetoric of universal common good. Serious – even if failed – attempts were nevertheless made, for instance, to ensure the transnational protection of minorities (Fink 2004).

There was an obvious need to justify even limited international activities to colleagues in national parliaments. In them national and international interests encountered each other without the rhetorical framework of diplomacy of the international assemblies, allowing more outspoken expressions. Our analysis of the language of 'international' (sometimes 'European' or 'world') 'politicians', 'representatives' and 'statesmen' focuses next on related references as well as on uses of the attribute 'inter-parliamentary' in the British, French and German parliaments in the interwar era.

Despite the central role of British ministers in the founding of the League, scepticism of international organisations remained widespread in the House of Commons. The League had been planned to guarantee peace through increased interaction between the representatives of nation-states. Joseph Devlin, leader of the moderate nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party, characterised its idealistic goals by talking about 'a great band of European statesmen trying to fashion out a new Europe and a new world, to create peace among all men, to bury old racial and national rivalry, and to destroy old passions and hatreds' (HC, 21 February 1921: 648). The shortcomings of the League remained subject to irony and so did 'party politicians' suspected of counting excessively on the new world organisation. William Barton (Lib) was ironic about League internationalism as seemingly advocated by the 'world statesmen' of David Lloyd George's (Lib) ministry:

> We have at the head of our own affairs a world statesman and a party politician, and he tells us that we ought to sweep away the barriers which stand between men and men and nations and nations, and that we ought to have the freest access between one country and another, in order that each may exchange freely, one with the other, the things which they are best capable of producing. (HC, 19 June 1922: 938)

Many Liberals emphasised the interests of the nation-states whereas for most Conservatives the Empire remained the first priority (Ihalainen and Leonhard 2022: 145; see references to imperial, colonial or Commonwealth politicians or statesmen in Figure 7.1). Among Liberals, too, Walter Runciman underscored the needs of the Empire once 'international statesmen' were discussing disarmament (HC, 16 March 1925: 1984). Many MPs preferred imperial rather than League internationalism. Colonial Secretary Leo Amery (Con) emphasised the capability of the Empire Parliamentary Association in creating 'inter-Parliamentary delegations' in informal and flexible ways

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

(HC, 29 July 1926: 2412). A positive spirit of internationalism thus focused on the British Empire as an alternative world organisation. At the other extreme of the political spectrum, Shapurji Saklatvala's (Lab) description of an international body was related to the Communist International (founded in 1919), which was a model impossible for most British parliamentarians to accept. According to Saklatvala, in 'a political body of an international character, with its international representatives', the representatives carried out policies 'decided by our international committee composed of all nationalities, a central body which runs a common policy in politics, and with common ideals for all countries associated with that international body' (HC, 1 December 1925: 2114). International representation tended to be associated with the revolutionary far left, diplomats and internationalists being associated with politicians more generally only in the postwar period (see Table AX.1. in the Appendix).

By the late 1920s, the atmosphere was more optimistic as some concrete progress had been made in international negotiations. The Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin expressed his support to a concept of 'European statesmanship' in search of compromises between nations:

> In Europe all her statesmen have got in the habit of meeting at Geneva and talking together, from which they learn not only each other's point of view but, what is very important, each other's idiosyncrasies as individuals, and I think there is rapidly coming into European statesmanship, among European statesman inter se, a desire in negotiation to see the other point of view and to compromise, if something can be effected by that compromise, far more than existed before the War. (HC, 13 November 1928: 754)

Such optimism followed from visions for the economic United States of Europe by the German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann and his French colleague Aristide Briand, whom William Graham (Lab) called 'representative European statesmen' (HC, 4 March 1930: 294). Yet interventions of this kind remained exceptions: the majority of the British Conservatives continued to be critical of Robert Cecil, a father of the League and a former British representative to it, and seemed to deny him recognition as 'one of the greatest international statesmen of the day' (Sir Geoffrey Mander, a Liberal specialist in foreign policy and supporter of the League, HC, 1 August 1930: 968; Ihalainen and Leonhard 2022: 140, 143–45). Cecil had a reputation as an isolated and idealistic Christian internationalist, who believed in international public opinion controlling foreign policy. At the same time, he was a pragmatic advocate of an English worldview (Johnson 2013: 274–75). The general deterioration of the international situation that culminated in Adolf Hitler's ascendancy in 1933, however, brought the

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

use of conceptualisations of European or international statesmen in British parliamentary discourse to a halt (Ihalainen and Leonhard 2022: 150–51).

In the French parliament, *politicien* was typically used to refer to a political actor at home in a context of an international question without distinct associations between the terms. *Politicien* could occasionally be used in a seemingly neutral sense (see the Introduction and Chapters 3 and 6), but much more often pejorative associations were made by the critics of *politiciens*. References to international political activities were sometimes made in the context of the term *interparlementaire*, but these did not necessarily concern the IPU in any serious sense. The term was used much more frequently for commissions between French parliamentarians investigating domestic questions, including the 'interparliamentary group of senators and deputies from devastated regions' (Henri-Constant Groussau, Rightist Independent, AN, 27 December 1920: 4028). Though there were various kinds of domestic inter-parliamentary commissions, such a particular usage reinforced associations with destruction caused by the Germans rather than with any new start in international politics.

Instead of multilateralism, *interparlementaire* might stand for friendship groups dedicated to advancing bilateral cooperation: there were 'Franco-Belgian, Franco-Italian and Franco-British inter-parliamentary groups' (President Raoul Péret in memory of Honoré Sauvan, AN, 19 January 1922: 18). The activities of the IPU did not raise much sentiment in the French parliament. An explicit discussion took place in December 1928 – after the preceding conferences of Paris and Berlin – as Fernand Merlin of the Democratic Left, an active member in the IPU, spoke in favour of a future 'international parliament' and about the initially French idea of 'the federation of European States'. Merlin emphasised French presidency and concluded: 'The surest way of spreading beyond our frontiers the French thought and spirit is to convince all parliaments of the peaceful tendencies of France' (AN, 22 December 1928: 1419). This intervention illustrates a dominant French parliamentary understanding of international cooperation, where the general attitude was that of disinterest, and parliamentary focus remained strictly on domestic affairs. It also exemplifies a tendency to combine universalist visions with the advancement of French interests (Koskenniemi 2002: 270). At the same time, there is no denying Foreign Minister Aristide Briand's contributions to multilateral diplomacy, disarmament, collective security, Franco-German relations and the idea of a European union within the confines of the League of Nations (Bariéty 2007).

In the German Reichstag, the attributes *international* and *interparlamentarisch* were rarely associated with the nouns *Politiker* or *Staatsmann*. The prevalent view on internationalism remained hostile, 'international' actors

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

being seen either in an anti-communist discourse as the Reds, socialists and workers or in an anti-capitalist and antisemitic discourse as capitalists, bourgeoisie and Jews (P&P, older German corpus, neighbouring words). The top themes associated with 'international' included not only labour, justice, relations, congresses and law, but also capital (P&P, neighbouring words). Before the release of the Versailles peace terms, prospects for German parliamentarians becoming international political actors still existed. In February 1919, Foreign Minister Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau spoke optimistically about the potential of the League to deconstruct tensions between member states, and expected its structure to include a federal parliament (*Bundesparlament*) of the type envisioned by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (DR, 14 February 1919: 71).

Once the expulsion of Germany from the League had been announced, disappointment led to reactions against internationalism also among liberals. In rightist discourse, conspiracy theories on Jewish and Marxist internationalism took over, which left hardly any space for declaring oneself an internationally oriented political actor (Ihalainen and Leonhard 2022: 146–48). 'International' became a highly divisive attribute so that representatives of the extreme left could declare how 'international socialists' were fighting against 'imperialistic politicians' across borders. They emphasised cooperation between British and German socialists (Georg Ledebour, Independent Social Democratic Party, DR, 28 April 1921: 3487), which provoked the Right to recycle their stab-in-the-back theories.

Despite such scepticism and ideological confrontations, some parliamentary interventions from the 1920s reflect optimism about international cooperation supported by an international law tradition that had viewed nationalism and internationalism as reconcilable (Koskenniemi 2002: 193, 234, 236). In 1922, the antimilitarist Chancellor Joseph Wirth (Catholic Centre) quoted the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George having called for the restoration of international trust 'from people to people, from government to government, from economy to economy' and concluded that 'every politician' willing to advance world peace should support such a goal, especially regarding economy (DR, 26 January 1922: 5561). Rudolf Breitscheid of the Independent Social Democrats conceded that even some non-socialist parliamentarians in France were working to improve Franco-German relations (DR, 22 June 1922: 7973). Members with different political backgrounds regarded the Inter-Parliamentary Union as the best forum for German parliamentarians to advance not only arbitration and international law but also to create links to American business and political life (Walter Schücking, an international law scholar, German Democrats, DR, 16 February 1922: 5889; Hugo Graf von und zu Lerchenfeld, Bavarian

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

People's Party, DR, 19 May 1925: 1943; Joseph Wirth, Catholic Centre, DR, 24 November 1926: 8181). Positive experiences from encounters with former enemies in the context of the meetings of IPU had made representatives of the Weimar coalition believe in the willingness of the French to negotiate with Germans (Joseph Wirth, DR, 1 February 1928: 12564) and in the potential of the League of Nations, despite its shortcomings, to advance the cause of peace (Carl Ulitzka Catholic Centre, DR, 31 January 1928: 12520). There were evident attempts to create space for peaceful international politics, though the involved political actors did not explicitly describe themselves as international politicians.

Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann (DVP) contributed greatly to constructing a mutual understanding between France and Germany and integrating Germany into international co-operation (Pohl 2015: 7). In the Reichstag, however, such internationally involved political actors were condemned as conspirators against Germany – as 'neo-German statesmen' ready to make concessions to the British and French (Gregor Strasser, DR, 24 November 1925: 4560). For the extreme right, Stresemann's diplomacy was 'an internationalist politics of fantasies' by 'an illusionist politician and would-be statesman of the first order' (*einen Illusionspolitiker und Wouldbe-Staatsmann ersten Ranges*, the word choice implying subservience to Western powers). Ernst Graf zu Reventlow of the German Völkisch Freedom Party condemned such activity as Free Masonic internationalism that constituted pure treason (DR, 23 March 1926: 6498; DR, 24 November 1926: 8174; DR, 24 June 1927: 11042). The Communists likewise rejected the policies of Locarno as mere reinforcement of imperialist alliances (Ernst Schneller, DR, 10 June 1926: 7441). The few internationally engaged members of the Reichstag defended the value of the IPU for world peace and the construction of better relations between France and Germany, but these 'politicians and parliamentarians' (*Politiker und Parlamentarier*) were constantly attacked by the rightist press (Breitscheid, DR, 30 January 1928: 12497).

The views from the British, French and German parliaments from the 1920s reflect an emerging but politically contested idea of extending the activities of politicians to international arenas. Inter- and transnational understandings of politics – as far as they existed – often originated from the far left, but there were some spokesmen for them also among revisionist socialists, liberals and moderate conservatives. The economic difficulties and the rise of totalitarian regimes in the 1930s shifted the focus to national politics and pejorative imaginaries of international cooperation. Another major war followed before a new political mindset and subsequent language could emerge. When it emerged, it did so in the context of a worldwide effort to create an authority over issues of peace and security.

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

International Political Actors in and around the United Nations

The conception of parliamentary diplomacy and the role of parliamentarians in international affairs have been recognised in the previous literature (see e.g. Weisglas and de Boer 2007). The old idea of having a third representative institution – a kind of global parliament or congress within the UN, whose members would be voted on by the citizens of the world – has appeared in public debates at regular intervals. In Kennedy's view, one of the early examples was a World Federalist movement established in 1947 considering the creation of democratic global structures that would be accountable to the citizens of the world (Kennedy 2006: 213).

In many ways, the UN was a continuation of the earlier world body, the League of Nations. This is true not only with the policymakers being the same men, many of whom had been involved in establishing the League earlier (Mazower 2009), but also with the shared ideas and norms of international cooperation. With the creation of the United Nations in 1945, representation of nation-states on the global stage was again initiated, at the same time when the idea of diplomacy was being rethought (i.e. Morgenthau 1964; Kennedy 2006). The UN provided a new forum for the conception for international politics, international law, and of international political actors in terms of universalism and promoting new norms and policies regarding human rights. In the post-Second World War era, discourses on the international were arising in national parliaments including those investigated in this chapter, at least until the 2010s (People & Parliament: UK, France and Germany, relative term frequencies).

The founding of the UN meant the creation of an international community governed by norms and ideas as pursued in the UN Charter. The Charter, with its preamble 'we the peoples' but also the 'sovereign equality of all states', highlighted the remaining tension between the global community and international means, on the one hand, and separate national interests and actors, on the other. The UN General Assembly, following the earlier example of the League in which all the member states have one vote and voice, has since its founding developed into a world forum for future-oriented politics. However, the UN delegations, with five delegates from each country, continued to represent the member states' governments (and their constituents as an intergovernmental organisation), not the UN or the peoples directly. In this section, we look in more detail at contemporary theoretical reflections and self-descriptions of international political actors in forming the new international organisation, as well as how the implications of the UN Charter were later discussed in national parliaments. Like

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

other multilateral institutions established after the Second World War, the UN has never escaped the role of national parliaments or parliamentarians (De Puig 2004: 17). In the context of the UN's founding, four types of actors can be found: traditional political actors in international relations (presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and secretaries of states), career diplomats (ambassadors and other officers), individuals with no political position (including academics), and transnational political actors (including parliamentarians). These four types of actors all took part in the UN negotiations and later in the UN itself as a part of the delegations.

In 1945, the invited delegates of fifty countries gathered in San Francisco to discuss the UN Charter based on the Dumbarton Oaks proposal. During the debates on the UN Charter, the delegates referred to both their own national contexts and the idea of a new world community ('We'). For example, McKenzie King from Canada referred to this new community: 'The measure of the unanimity of our country is to be found in its delegation to this Conference. The delegates were selected while our Parliament was in Session. They were chosen from both houses and from both sides of each house. They represent all important shades of opinion in Canada' (UN, April 27, 1945: 30). As in the present day, the delegates were considered to represent their country, the difference being that the parliamentarians at the time of founding actually were said to have a mandate from the people. This was not the case with the UN delegations in the 2020s, with some exceptions (for example, the US delegation involving representatives from both Houses of Congress, selected by it and appointed by the President). However, as an address by Mr Andrade (Bolivia) during the negotiations illustrates ('Mr. President, Honorable Delegates of the United Nations'), the idea of 'delegates' to the United Nations was recognised in 1945 but in terms of attending the United Nations Conference on International Organizations (UNCIO) rather than describing their status as 'politicians' (UN, April 27, 1945: 21). The delegates were, however, considered to be acting politically. The delegate Mr Gaceres (Honduras) mentioned how 'The men, peoples, and governments which have congregated here to deliberate and resolve in world peace and security, despite their divergence of geography, history, power, or political systems, have only one moral purpose, that of working together for the good of the international community' (UN, April 29, 1945: 12).

It is also important to consider how the members of the national parliaments saw their role in ratifying this new forum of international politics and decision-making. The obvious counter-concept for a politician is a diplomat involved in the practice of negotiation and communication but also representation of a country or government rather than constituents, as mentioned in the case of Britain, Germany and Netherlands (see the

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

Introduction). The following examples focus on two case studies, namely the US Congress and the British House of Commons. The examined debates on ratifying the UN Charter in the national legislatures did not include many direct references to the term 'politician' or references indicating members discussing themselves as politicians. There are some exceptions, but they reflect nationalistic views even when discussing international relations or international organisations. Alfred Ernle Montacute Chatfield, Lord Chatfield, for example, pointed out on 28 March 1944 that Lord Wedwood had stated in 'your Lordship's House, "We are all politicians here"', but when it came to international affairs the terms used were 'statesman/-men' or 'delegates'. In the United States, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives reflected upon their role in deciding on international cooperation, their commitment to international affairs and the role of Congress and parliament in international affairs without conceptualising themselves as politicians. Senators did, however, consider their role of representing their constituents when deciding on international affairs. Another point of consideration was that the UN Charter was only the beginning, while in the future, the role of the senators would be not only to uphold but also to update the UN's principles and modes of action (Haynes and Ignatieff 2003). Francis John Myers (Democrat from Pennsylvania) argued: 'I look in the future for frequent criticism here on the Senate floor of actions and policies of the new United Nations Organization' (USS, 27 July 1945: 8105). The senators clearly considered that they had a role in developing the UN and related issues without actually being part of the UN or the US delegation. They also considered their role when enacting a charter as bridging the gap between the national and international: 'The ratification of the United Nations Charter marks a great turning point in American history. We are embarking now on a great new adventure of international co-operation' (Senator Alexander Wiley, Republican from Wisconsin, US Senate, 28 July 1945: 8143). Senator Alben Barkley (Republican Senator from Kentucky) also considered how the Charter secured the idea of 'we the people' rather than the role of politicians: 'Notwithstanding the leadership of men, notwithstanding the power of potentates, politicians, and statesmen, the destiny of mankind is within the hollow of the hands of the people' (US Senate, 24 July 1945: 8141).

The UN is seen primarily as an intergovernmental organisation, but the rules of the General Assembly follow parliamentary procedure. The involvement of parliaments and parliamentarians can be seen as essential in securing more diverse views and representation. The usual argument on behalf of including the parliaments and parliamentarians is also rather practical – they are in the position of translating international norms and

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

agreements into (domestic) action (see IPU 2016).[1] The IPU itself has been eager to promote the involvement of parliamentarians in the multilateral framework, but the UN has also broadened the view. One example of this is the UN's cooperation with the national parliaments and Inter-Parliamentary Union (Kronlund 2023).

The Council of Europe as a New Attempt at International Representation

What the UN provided for international political actors was a framework in which regional cooperation could take place. The years immediately after the Second World War were also a period of intense exchange of ideas and organising meetings to discuss possible institutional structures to create unity in Europe. As a result, the cornerstones of European integration were laid. For contemporaries, acting politically was focused on a person's ability to simultaneously be a member of a national parliament while having the capability to represent broader cultural and political community in international politics. However, due to organisational functions and limitations, these roles featured different kinds of opportunities to use power. Establishing an international authority in Europe was a major step towards creating a legitimate international organisation in which political actors could participate. The creation of the Council of Europe in 1949 was a serious even if a failed effort to create an organisation for international representation and even parliamentarism, as some contemporaries envisaged (Rittberger 2005: 74–76; Wassenberg 2013; Krumrey 2018: 111–16). As a result, politicians in different countries had an opportunity to rethink political representation and explore the relations between national and international politics and the role of the nation. They could even highlight a discursive vision of European unity as a source of representation instead of referring to the electorate (see Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008).

During its first years, the Council of Europe served as a de facto testing ground for an international parliamentary organisation. It provided a forum in which more federalist-minded representatives could discuss creating a political culture of inter-parliamentary decision-making – a discussion that featured ideas on what it meant to be an international political actor, in other words a member of the national parliament, participating in decision-making on an international forum. This work featured ideas on decision-making procedures, representation, and scope of mandate to decide with the executive branch.

It is worthwhile to consider what the contemporaries in 1949–50 thought about representatives in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe,

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

and what those views reveal about a political actor as not only a national politician but also as an international one. The Consultative Assembly, later called Parliamentary Assembly, lacked legislative powers but gradually became the only and perhaps the most developed model of a pan-European consultative assembly or a 'parliament of greater Europe' (De Puig 2004). When it was added to the structure of the Council of Europe, it was an innovation, as a parliamentary assembly in an international organisation had not previously been turned into reality despite some post-First World War initiatives. In a few years it became a widely recognised representative of European public opinion (Robertson and CoE 1961: 49, 250–52) accompanied by the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community after 1951.

The challenge for an organisation to act as an embodiment of European unity was in ensuring that its powers would not be supranational in a political sense, which would thus limit the possibilities for the organisation to force member states to act according to commonly agreed upon decisions (NA, CAB 128/13/19: 11–12). This influenced what being a political actor on an international forum could mean. The Statute of the Council of Europe, adopted on 5 May 1949, stated that membership in the Committee of Ministers was reserved for one representative from each member state, with Ministers for Foreign Affairs being explicitly mentioned as primary representatives (The Council of Europe 1949a, article 14). Membership in the Consultative Assembly was more open but focused on national parliaments selecting their members in national delegations (ibid., article 25). In practice, who would be chosen to represent a particular nation would also depend on the ideological context that related to broader events in Europe and emerging tensions between the West and the Soviet bloc (NA, CAB 129/23/6: 1–2).

When the Consultative Assembly convened for the first time in August 1949, there were 101 representatives from twelve countries, including Belgium, France, Britain, Sweden, Turkey and Greece. The representatives were aware of the historic moment. Edouard Herriot, the Provisional President, spoke about the need to find a political solution that could tackle problems, the key rationale behind European states starting to work together. He reminded the Assembly: 'In order to get over so many difficulties and remove them, there must be a political body, a political will and political action. This is the reason and the meaning of your gathering. This is an event of cardinal historical importance. Your task is to succeed, through the efforts of all, in a field where so many half-hearted efforts have failed' (CoE, 10 August 1949: 10). The Committee of Ministers representing national governments had urged the Consultative Assembly to draft a proposal of

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

how to develop the organisation further, and this was indeed carried out. In the debates of the Consultative Assembly, conceptualisations of 'international politician' were lacking; the contemporaries continued to call themselves 'representatives' or 'delegates', indicating efforts to extend the idea of representation from a national sphere to an international one. This would require rethinking who would be represented and perhaps a partial rejection of national representation. Turkish representative Kasim Gülek described to the representatives of the Assembly: 'We are not here as national groups, but as Representatives of nations; we are here as Representatives of different European peoples, and our different countries are our constituents in this Parliament' (CoE, 17 August 1949: 242). This idea of representation already went much further than anything recognised in the IPU or UN. It was in relation to a debate in 1950 about other political authorities and organisations when the idea of having a European 'politician' first emerged. French representative André Philip (The French Section of the Workers' International) argued: 'What we aim at having is the first European Ministry, having at its head a responsible figure who will be a European politician, not merely a national politician' (CoE, 14 August 1950: 244). Such direct conceptualisations were otherwise sparse, but this shows that from the 1950s onwards the concept of international, 'European politician' existed.

The idea of what characteristics a 'politician' should have was present at the CoE, and this theme was reflected by representatives from several countries, illustrating a truly international view of the theme. Politicians were viewed as something different from experts – politicians were there to give political advice with the help of experts, and were thus in a position to lead international efforts for cooperation. As the function of the Assembly was only advisory, the task of the political representatives was less to decide than to enable and encourage communication and political collaboration between peoples, national parliaments, governments and different international bodies (in 1949 most significantly the Council of Europe and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation). Thus, the representatives in the Consultative Assembly had to take their business seriously, to be able to act as a political authority but also to be sensitive towards public opinion. At the same time, members of the Consultative Assembly were members of national parliaments and thus connected to their electorates, which essentially required these politicians to be able to act responsibly and be aware of potential consequences. They were expected to organise and be able to fulfil their function, and thus to participate in solving topical international challenges (Aidan Crawley, CoE, 23 August 1949: 556; Peggy Herbison, 24 August 1949: 586; Guy Mollet, 17 August 1950: 342). As Pierre-Henri Teitgen of France (Mouvement Republicain

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

Populaire) argued in November 1950 during a debate on specialised authorities in different fields (such as coal and steel), deciding on general lines was important: 'It will be necessary to weigh the pros and cons, assess the national interests and above all ensure that the common weal comes first. Now, this is by definition the task of politicians [*d'hommes politiques*]' (CoE, 23 November 1950: 1590).[2] The ability to channel public opinion at a European level was significant. 'Through us, European public opinion, which we all represent, has found its voice' (Etienne de la Vallée-Poussin, CoE, 11 August 1950: 127). Indeed, representatives of the Assembly had a special connection to public opinion, despite not being elected by the people directly to become representatives, 'as parliamentary Representatives who are the echo of such public opinion' (Mario Cingolani, CoE, 9 August 1950: 54), 'as leaders and spokesmen of public opinion' (Seán MacBride, CoE, 11 August 1950: 150).

The key instrument that politicians had at their disposal at the international forum was in its core a discursive one. As British representative Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe (Con) said: 'We are all politicians. We know that a wrong form, a wrong appearance, might do great harm when the reality has no wrong whatever in it' (CoE, 8 September 1949: 1222). What also separated politicians from experts or technocrats was that politicians were expected to bring forth visions and dreams of how to solve problems and to approach European unity as a major aim (Enzo Giacchero, CoE, 6 September 1949: 1074; André Philip, CoE, 11 August 1950: 166). This signified that even though members of the Consultative Assembly were constrained by the Statute of the organisation, they nevertheless were political leaders and at least some of them wanted to act like ones at the international level. The Committee of Ministers had instructed the Consultative Assembly that in its first session it should start exploring and recommending how the organisation could be improved. That was a theme that enabled discussions on whether the Consultative Assembly could be 'the European Parliament in embryo' (Harold Macmillan, CoE, 17 August 1949: 238) or true parliament, thus signifying an international, or indeed European representative politician in particular that could be willing to step beyond the boundaries of national interests and support the limitation of national sovereignty (Erik Nölting, CoE, 14 August 1950: 213), thus reflecting a strengthening post-war emphasis on language of European integration (Andrén and van Eijnatten 2022: 226–27). When the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established in 1951 and the economic integration of Western Europe started, however, the Council of Europe was reduced to a minor role, as a new and more powerful forum for international political action in a European context emerged.

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

European Politicians in the European Union

The integration of Europe after the Second World War led to intense institutional creativity. Quite early, the issues were raised whether the members of the newly created institutions should be regarded as bureaucrats, as domestic politicians acting at the European level or as new kinds of dedicated politicians. Regarding the High Authority that became the European Commission in 1957, the member states first sent diplomats and senior civil servants. With the deepening of integration in the 1980s, the profile of commissioners progressively evolved to the profit of former ministers and even prime ministers. By the 2020s, the *political* nature of the heads of the Commission was more acknowledged and frequent but such identification was based on the former domestic occupations of the members rather than a general perception of them as political actors at the European level.

When the Common Assembly of the ECSC met in 1953, its seventy-eight members decided to sit by political groups – not by country delegations (Mény 2009: 53). In so doing, those that were described as 'the representatives of the peoples' in the ECSC treaty provided a decisive input in promoting the figure of a European representative or politician. Progressively, an original kind of supranational parliamentarisation took shape in the EU with decisive steps such as the direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979. By asserting itself as a true supranational parliament and not as an international forum, the European Parliament put a lot of effort into institutionalising the role and statute of its members. Arguably, this proactive strategy gave birth to the very notion of European politicians used by some members during debates. Yet, as we will see, the meaning of the concept was still not standardised by the 2020s and there were few personalities who could embody it.

The institutionalisation of the notion of European politicians has been shaped through the progressive formalisation, standardisation, specialisation and complexification of the MEP's statutes. Originally, the provisions relative to them were minimal with a 1965 protocol granting 'the free movement of members of the Assembly travelling to or from the place of meeting of the Assembly' as well as basic immunities including from any measure of detention and from legal proceedings on the territory of any member state (Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities, Brussels, 8 April 1965). The statute progressively became more detailed with the members' direct election in 1979, the compulsory proportional rule for elections in 1999, and the incompatibility with membership of national parliaments in 2004 (Corbett, Jacobs and Darren 2016).

Discussed over the course of no less than seven years, the single statute for MEPs voted in 2009 constitutes a major step in the standardisation of the

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

members as it introduces uniform salaries, pensions and social benefits paid out of the EP's budget (Decision of the EP of 28 September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament, 2005/684/EC, Euratom). During plenary debates relative to the statute, orators particularly stressed the equality of wages as an essential condition for the genuine homogeneity of legislators (Klaus-Heiner Lehne, EP, 2 June 2003). The statute also emphasises the necessary independence of the members, prohibiting for instance binding voting instructions or commitment to resign before the end of term. It appears therefore that the basic principles of modern parliamentary representation are used in order to empower the EP as a specific and distinct level of governance. When listening to the rapporteur during one of the debates, it is difficult to distinguish between the emphasis put on the political nature of the EU and the necessary institutional autonomy of the Parliament vis-à-vis other European institutions:

> The fundamental issue is of whether this European Community is a real community or an international organisation. If it were merely an international organisation, then the Council would indeed have the prerogative as regards Members' privileges and immunities. The question as to whether or not we should now regulate MEPs' privileges and immunities boils down to the question of whether this European Community is a community or an international organisation, of whether we are a parliamentary assembly or a parliament worthy of the name. That is what it is about! (Willi Rothley, EP, 2 June 2003)

The notion of a European political actor was not explicitly framed as 'politician' during debates over the statute but the speeches implicitly and indirectly addressed which qualities were expected from MEPs: autonomy from external pressures whether they originated from institutions or parties as well as constant responsiveness towards voters. Many MEPs stressed their distinctiveness as representatives (rather than bureaucrats), which made them accountable to their voters despite the harmonisation of their salaries. To quote some of them who were favourable to the new statute: 'we are not civil servants – we represent the citizens of the four corners of the European Union' (Richard Inglewood, EP, 2 June 2003); 'I do not regard myself here as an employee of the European Union: I am a representative of my constituents' (Neil MacCormick, EP, 2 June 2003).

Has this strategy of institutionalisation of the MEPs statute, roles and functions actually given birth to a shared understanding and use of the very notion of politicians? The answer appears to be mixed. On the one hand, 'European politician' as an expression is in use, as illustrated by Table 7.1. Yet the adjective 'European' is associated with 'politician' only in about

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

Table 7.1. Occurrence of the expression 'European politician' during the European Parliament debates by term (1994–2024). Source: European Parliament (EP), English-language record of the debates. © Olivier Rozenberg.

1994–99	1999–2004	2004–9	2009–14	2014–19	2019–24
20	35	58	49	27	13

5 percent of the cases where 'politician' is used – a proportion stable since the mid-1990s.

It can be noted that the decade (2004–14) when the term was more frequently used corresponds both to the enlargement of the EU with the project to build a unique continental community and the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty that was supposed to parliamentarise the relationship between EU institutions. The references to politicians reflect the ambition to organise the EU system according to constitutional rather than diplomatic logics. After 2014, the expression became less common despite the priority established in his inaugural address by President Jean-Claude Juncker to build a 'political' Commission followed by Ursula von der Leyen's 'geopolitical' one. Juncker was President of the European Commission from 2014 to 2019 and von der Leyen, after him from 2019. The decline in use of the expression 'European politician' after 2014 may be explained by the fact that the meaning associated with 'politician' is conflictual. From the parliamentary term of 2019–24, at least three different meanings can be distinguished.

First, a European politician is a recognised state-person as a head of government of a (major) member state or one of the leaders of the EU institutions, which is reminiscent of the meaning given to the concept already in the interwar period. The general significance of these leaders as well as their important role in diplomatic activities give them the status of a European politician. For instance, during a memorial ceremony for a former EP President, group leader Ska Keller said: 'Dear Members of this House, we have lost a most distinguished colleague and a great European politician' (EP, 17 January 2022). Sometimes, this dimension of a European politician was recognised while blaming this person for his activities. For instance, Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, was criticised for a visit to Moscow with these words: 'The last thing we need to hear from a European politician speaking in Moscow today is a criticism of our ally in Washington' (Vladimír Bilčík, EP, 9 February 2021).

The second, more negative, use of the concept of European politician has been to criticise leaders and colleagues for their lack of resistance vis-à-vis authoritarian leaders and regimes. Implicitly, the notion of Europeanness is used as a semantic contrast: it would be, in a way, worse to support President

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

Putin or Iran, for instance, in light of European values. To illustrate this, a conservative member, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, said in 2022: 'No wonder that Putin likes to humiliate European politicians and has been quite successful in this. Those politicians desire to accommodate Russia and are keen on conducting business as usual with her . . .' (EP, 16 February 2022). On the same topic, a right-wing colleague contrasted her identity as a responsible politician with the betrayal of some European ones: 'As politicians, the only people we should be answerable to are the voters and not regimes that seek to undermine our European values. We have seen high-profile European politicians funded by loans from banks with close links to Putin's regime' (Frances Fitzgerald, EP, 6 July 2022).

Third and last, the expression 'European politicians' has also been used on some occasions by the members of the EP to refer to themselves. In a sentence that is typical of the final praises for legislative deals passed in the EP, a Green member said: 'I want to thank the rapporteur and the shadows for the very constructive negotiations where they ended up with solid compromises on most of the articles . . . That shows that we have brought a big majority of European politicians and views also in Member States together in hastening the renewable transition' (Ville Niinistö, EP, 13 September 2022). The positive reference to European politicians allows the orator both to highlight the political nature of the EP and to stand on the level of top European decision-makers. For instance, another Green MEP, Marcel Kolaja, stated about LGBTIQ+ rights that '[a]s European politicians, we share the responsibility to ensure that Europe is a safe space for everyone' (EP, 18 October 2022). The reference to European politicians is indeed a way to rhetorically create a 'we' on which a political community is based.

Beyond speeches, is it possible to distinguish any political actors at the EU level who have a reputation within the EU sphere of being European politicians? Existing work on the sociology of political careers related to the EP indicates that, around the mid-1990s, professional politicians from diverse member states made the choice of a European career (Scarrow 1997; Beauvallet and Michon 2010; Whitaker 2014). Unlike American career politicians for whom entering the Congress constitutes a shared dream for everyone, a career specialised in European affairs is not considered the most successful one but rather as an available option among others, decided early according to the politician's expertise and biography.

Guy Verhofstadt offers a perfect illustration of the figure of the specialised politician in EU affairs. Prime minister of Belgium for nine years (1999–2008), he then entered the EP where he was elected three times. As a member of the Liberals, he was highly influential as this group played a pivotal role within the EP. Similar examples within most of the groups

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

could be given with members serving between three and six terms. Yet the lack of global recognition of someone like Verhofstadt points to the limit of this institutionalisation. The parochial feature of domestic public spheres and the isolation of the 'Brussels bubble' often lead to active politicians at the EU level being ignored nationally. Top EU positions, like President of the Commission and of the Council, are usually not given to true European experts but rather to former heads of government and ministers. Moreover, a few European politicians have become famous through leaving the EU to compete in national electoral contests. This was the case for the former president of the EP, Martin Schulz, who led the left during the 2017 German parliamentary election, for former commissioner Michel Barnier who ran for the French right primaries in 2021 and was shortly prime minister in 2024, and also for Commissioner Frans Timmermans, leader of an electoral list in the Netherlands in 2023. The three of them failed, confirming the disconnect between EU and national politics.

If one seeks to identify European politicians who hold some prestige beyond Brussels, the examples are not numerous. European institutions have done their best to advertise some figures through labelling their founding members (the 'fathers of Europe', see Cohen 2007), giving medals (the Charlemagne prize) and offering some of them the opportunity to deliver speeches (in Bruges and Aachen, for instance). Yet, only a few European politicians possessing great recognition outside of the EU institutions can be pointed out. By contrast, some key actors for the early community period tend to be perceived as senior civil servants (like Jean Monnet) or diplomats (like Walter Hallstein) but not as genuine political leaders. In his memoirs (1976), Monnet even showed some disdain vis-à-vis classical politicians, suspected of parochialism and of being paralysed by short-term considerations. By contrast, he hoped that Community institutions could shape 'un nouvel homme' – a new man cured of nationalism.

In the years following the direct elections of the EP, some political actors with a European career emerged. Altiero Spinelli, one of the so-called founding fathers of European integration, constitutes a precursor in that respect. Elected in Strasbourg in 1979, this former anti-fascist Italian politician played an active role in relaunching the building of political Europe, promoting a project that paved the way to the Single Act – a new treaty that deepened economic integration in 1986. In the same period, Simone Veil, president of the EP from 1979 to 1982, was also perceived as a true political leader active at the Community level. Her short presidency made a strong impression beyond her native French borders (Gaulmyn and Rozenberg 2021), but peculiar circumstances may explain this reputation. President of the first directly elected parliament in 1979, she was a woman supporting

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

women's rights and a former Jewish deportee to Auschwitz. Like Veil, President of the Commission from 1985 to 1995, the Frenchman Jacques Delors had a determining influence in the 'house that he built' (Grant 1994). He decisively imposed himself in the group portraits of international summits such as the G7. Yet his fame among European citizens remained inferior to that of top heads of state and government of this time, such as Mitterrand, Kohl or Thatcher (Drake 2000). His leadership is also highly specific to the relaunch of the integration process in the late 1980s.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit is a unique case of a Franco-German political figure well-known within both countries and beyond as a European politician. The former radical-left activist was first active within each country (in France in May 1968, then in Germany at the city level) before entering the EP in 1994, where he was elected for twenty years and chaired the Green group. He alternated between standing as a candidate for France and Germany in the European elections. Although salient plenary debates are rather rare in the EP, Cohn-Bendit could appease his appetite for speeches and public controversies during some plenary sessions of the EP, especially at the beginning of the rotating presidencies of the Council of the EU when the prime minister in charge is questioned. Yet his example is rather unique, as indicated by the low number of MEPs elected in a member state to which they are not native: fewer than twenty since 1992.

It could be asked whether Nigel Farage paradoxically constitutes a European politician. This British agitator used his long mandate in the EP (1999–2020) to lead the fight against British membership in the EU. In order to attract the attention of voters, he put forward provocative statements close to insults during plenary debates (Costa and Rozenberg 2023). In 2010, when Herman Van Rompuy was elected as President of the Council, he attacked him with these seasoned words:

> I do not want to be rude, but you know, really, you have the charisma of a damp rag and the appearance of a low-grade bank clerk. (*Protests*) The question that I want to ask and that we are all going to ask is: who are you? I had never heard of you; nobody in Europe had ever heard of you. I would like to ask you, Mr President: who voted for you? (*Loud protests*) And what mechanism – I know democracy is not popular with you lot – what mechanism do the peoples of Europe have to remove you? Is this European democracy? (EP, 24 February 2010)

According to Farage, Van Rompuy could not be a true European politician because he lacked the necessary qualities national politicians should have: widespread fame, legitimacy through elections and, possibly, some charisma. Through multiplying these kinds of speeches on the floor, Farage ironically

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

contributed to performing a political role at the European level, becoming in the public pan-European sphere a kind of Eurosceptic European politician.

Conclusion

The founding of new, inter- and transnational political forums and the development of international affairs in the aftermath of the First World War created possibilities of cross-national interaction for persons selected to represent national governments or parliaments. Work surrounding the League of Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and later the United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union, might have supported the emergence of discourses within which the ideas of international politics, political forums and their rules, as well as political actors participating in international activities, could have been described and defined. Our investigation shows, however, that such discourses remained rare and that language has lagged behind institutional developments. It was sometimes possible to conceptualise international political actors as 'politicians' or 'statesman', but such conceptualisations could be reluctant or pejorative. These conceptualisations were influenced by the dominant ideologies of each period – be they empire or nation-centred conservatism, trade-oriented liberalism, varieties of socialist internationalism, or European federalism. In a world in which nation-states remain(ed) the primary political unit, politicians continued to be viewed mainly as national political actors, also due to the lack of an international public opinion that they could have addressed. It was easier to appear as a national representative than an international politician, which reflects positive and broad connotations of representation of the people as opposed to the identity of an internationally oriented politician. The process that eventually led to the conceptualisation of an international political actor – even 'politician' – was a gradual one, with agents of foreign policy acting within international policy institutions playing key roles.

Politicians as national parliamentarians had traditionally not regarded themselves as international agents but rather as national political actors who might have a say in international affairs, especially if elected to represent the interests of their nation in an international forum. By the late 1920s, some delegates had turned into spokesmen for enhanced international cooperation in their national parliaments – only to find themselves opposed by many of their colleagues. In the international forums, ideals and experiences of parliamentary procedures developed at the national level influenced conceptualisations of the role of an international politician: national representatives were treated on equal terms, procedures and deliberations recalled those of national parliaments, and the representatives were supposed to

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

promote citizens' views. What is specific to the international level is the uncertain nature of what politicians stand for and also the contested representativeness of international institutions. Political actors in such institutions were required to balance the interests of nation-states with greater ideals for peace, cooperation and Europe, some succeeding better in this than others.

Our empirical exploration of discourses on and by international political actors suggests that the concept of a European statesman was gradually emerging in the 1920s within a very limited group of national parliamentarians but made no breakthrough. Associations between representatives and nation-states continued to overrule those between politicians and the international. Only by the 1950s did it become possible to openly express the idea of an international or rather European politician. Even then this required institutions such as the Council of Europe, where conceptualisations happened to a modest degree, and the European Communities, where they turned out to be somewhat easier. In the United Nations, by contrast, the idea of delegates remained dominant. These examples show that not only did changing self-understandings by internationally engaged politicians matter, but also the emergence of a broader notion of cooperation in a trans- or supranational sense.

Since the end of the twentieth century, a further step may have been taken in the internationalisation of political actors with the conjunction of two different trends. First, the intensification of parliamentary politics around the European Parliament gave rise to some rare supranational actors, including those who viewed themselves as European politicians as well as some colourful Eurosceptic figures. Second, the internationalisation of major policy issues and the subsequent intensification of summitry diplomacy strengthened the perception of some national leaders as international actors (Foret 2008). Within the European Council especially, the frequency of the meetings, their diplomatic saliency in some cases or the informal attitude of heads of state and government contributed to naturalise the figure of international politicians. International politicians were understood as a group of national leaders collectively in charge of crucial transnational issues. These international politicians are basically domestic politicians representing the national public sphere at the European – and occasionally global – level as well. The figure of an international politician has emerged only very recently as major domestic politicians in Europe have been viewed through an international prism. The EU has been increasingly conceived as a polity of its own – with much longer sitting times of the EP. In order to have international politicians, an international polity is required first.

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.

Pasi Ihalainen is Academy of Finland Professor at the Department of History and Ethnology, University of Jyväskylä, and has previously worked as a visiting professor at the universities of Freiburg, Gothenburg, Leiden and Uppsala and Utrecht. He has published widely on the history of political discourse and the conceptual history of nationalism, internationalism, democracy and parliamentarism since the eighteenth century, applying comparative and transnational perspectives. ORCID 0000-0002-5468-4829.

Teemu Häkkinen is a docent in general history at the University of Jyväskylä. His research interests include parliamentary and conceptual history, early history of European integration, and foreign and defence policy decision-making. ORCID 0000-0003-0130-7314.

Anna Kronlund is a docent in political science and works as acting university lecturer in the Department of Contemporary History, Philosophy and Political Science, University of Turku. She has published on US politics and Congress, and her monograph (Nomos, 2022) deals with the separation of powers and parliamentary politics in times of crisis. Her current project is on the United Nations' legitimacy and transnational challenges. ORCID 0000-0002-1093-5278.

Olivier Rozenberg is Senior Fellow in the School of Government of Luiss Guido Carli, in Rome. He specialises in the comparison of legislatures in Europe and has published on the role of national parliaments in the European Union. He also co-edited a *Handbook of Parliamentary Studies* (E. Elgar, 2020). ORCID 0000-0003-2468-7639.

Notes

1. 'Parliaments and parliamentarians, effectively employing the constitutional mechanisms entrusted to them – the powers to legislate, to hold governments accountable, to allocate budgets and to represent the people – will play a pivotal role, translating the international commitments into action at the national level and ensuring that they are implemented effectively' (IPU, 2016, 2).
2. Reports of the Consultative Assembly were published both in English and French – translations used in this section are therefore official translations.

This chapter is from 'The Figure of the Politician in Modern and Contemporary Europe', edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Rosario López, Kari Palonen and Henk te Velde. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781836952602. It is available open access under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license thanks to the support from the Open Science Centre f the University of Jyväskylä, the Huygens Institute for the History and Culture of the Netherlands and the Kone Foundation. Not for resale.