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Tworzenie grup politycznych w Parlamencie Europejskim

The European Parliament is a place where the cooperation of political parties from fifteen EU countries is required. More than a hundred parties have to find a way to be present at the European political scene. It would be difficult for the Parliament to have a real vote in the EU institutional structure if there were so many actors within. Thus, political groups – sometimes called “factions” – are formed.

Political groups have to operate in a very specific background whose main feature is multinationality and transnationality of participants who must look for the right forms of cooperation. The creation of factions is different from the formation of party clubs in national parliaments.

The aim of this article is to give very general information about the analysed problem¹ by presenting three aspects of formation of political groups. The first is the formal aspect with its practical results, the second one focuses on the internal structure of factions and the third on decision-making within them.

FORMAL ASPECT

In this section the analysis comprises formal principles governing the formation of political groups, the presentation of special facilities offered to the groups, two practical patterns of the creation of factions rooted in formal solutions.

¹ A strict empirical analysis of the activity of political groups one can find in: P. Tosiek, *Funkcjonowanie grup politycznych w Parlamencie Europejskim (analiza ilościowa)*, “Studia Europejskie” 2000, nr 2, pp. 91–106.

Basic regulations dealing with the creation of political groups are not included into the EU primary law but arise from the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (RP).² Chapter V of this document (*Political Groups* – art. 29–31) is of a vital importance.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) may form themselves into groups according to their political affinities (art. 29.1 RP), i.e. there is no formal ground to create a faction on another basis (e.g., the national one).

Another problem is the minimum of membership. The Rules of Procedure state that “a political group must comprise members from more than one member state”. The faction may be formed on the following conditions:

- * there should be at least 23 deputies if they come from two member states;
- * 18 – if they come from three member states;
- * 14 – if they come from four or more member states (art. 29.2 RP).

The minimum of membership is the main stimulator of the creation of political groups. The reason to include this rule is to reach the high level of cohesion of the EP *via* limitation of the number of political factions.

A member of the EP may not belong to more than one group (art. 29.3 RP). The President of the EP shall be notified in a special statement when a political group is set up. This statement shall specify the name of the group, its members and its Bureau (art. 29.4 RP). The statement shall be published in the “Official Journal of the European Communities” (art. 29.5 RP).

The Rules of Procedure give political groups many prerogatives which are connected with the composition of the Parliament governing bodies and committees, plenary sittings etc. In this context the position of the Conference of Presidents should be mentioned. This body is responsible for the agenda of plenary sittings and consists of the EP President and the chairmen of political groups. Decisions are taken by a consensus but where it cannot be reached, the matter shall be put to a vote subject to a weighting based on the number of members in each political group (art. 23 RP). Thus, the role of the biggest factions is strongly expressed.

The activity of political groups is financed by the Parliament’s budget. The amount of the money granted depends on the number of members who belong to each faction. The funds are divided into three parts: expenses of the staff of the groups, expenses connected with political activity and information services. Apart from this direct help the rooms in the EP seat and some technical facilities are also offered to the groups. The costs of the functioning of factions are equal approximately 10 per cent of the annual EP budget (in 1994 twenty million ECU).³

² *European Parliament. Rules of Procedure*, 14th Edition, June 1999 (as at October 2000) – WEB Version: URL <<http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm>>.

³ F. Jacobs, R. Corbett, M. Shackleton, *European Parliament*, London 1995, pp. 86–87.

The position of political groups is much stronger than the role of non-attached members of the EP. The latter ones are provided with a secretariat to help them in technical matters (art. 30 RP) but their formal and real position is that of a minimum.

The formal regulations give rise to two practical patterns of the creation of the groups.⁴ The first one focuses on the ideological basis: a faction is formed when national political parties have similar manifestoes, represent the same political families etc. The biggest groups like Christian Democrats or Socialists have been founded according to this model.

The second pattern is rooted in the Rules of Procedure and expresses the will to influence EP policy while common ideological platform is absent or very weak. This model – called “organisational” one – is adopted by small factions. The best examples in the history of the European Parliament were so-called “technical groups” which consisted of MEPs from different political wings and had no common manifesto but used the powers given by formal regulations.⁵

It has to be noticed, however, that in the recent EP terms both patterns have been mixed. Large groups attract national parties – which are sometimes far from their political platform – to be more and more influential. Small factions, on the other hand, are created by the core that is usually politically cohesive and the accessory members who are necessary to achieve a minimum of membership to form a group.

The regulations of the Rules of Procedure promote the formation of transnational political groups. The formal solutions aim at strengthening co-operational processes among political parties which come from different member states and therefore at creating long-lasting mechanisms that may aggregate their interests. This fact is reflected in the structure of political factions.

STRUCTURAL ASPECT

The structural platform of the analysis in this section is connected with the exploration of the composition of political groups. Political groups form a very complicated international political structures. This fact demands a special internal organisation that takes into account transnational and multi-party character of these groups.

Each group has its own rules and regulations (“statutes”) but in practice there are many similar or even identical solutions. Every group is a hierarchical

⁴ S. Hix, Ch. Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, London 1997, pp. 94–96.

⁵ The Technical Group of Independent Members (TDI) is one of the factions in the present EP term (see below).

organisation that consists of the Bureau, the President, Deputy Presidents, Treasurer, working groups and the Secretariat.⁶

The Bureau is composed of the President, Deputy Presidents, the Treasurer and the Members of the Bureau. The shape of this body depends on the size of a faction and the number of parties which form this faction. For instance, in the biggest group (PPE-DE) the following deputies are included: the President, Deputy Presidents, the Treasurer, members of the group who are also the members of Parliament's Bureau, chairmen of the EP committees, chairmen of interparliamentary delegations, chairmen of the working groups, heads of national delegations and one co-opted member for every ten members of a national delegation.⁷

The powers of the Bureaux are regulated in the statutes of the groups. Generally, they refer to the preparation of political discussions within the factions and position papers of the groups at Parliamentary forum, decision-making dealing with the management of the groups and their secretariats.⁸ The main way to make a decision in the Bureau is consensus.

The Presidents of factions are elected by members of a group and represent them in the EP Conference of Presidents. The duties of the President include coordination of professional activity of the faction but his political role depends mainly on his personality. The majority of groups have a single President. However, there are three factions with double or even triple Presidency (Verts/ALE: two Co-Presidents, TDI: three Co-Presidents, EDD: three Co-Presidents).⁹ The latter solutions aim at achieving high internal cohesion.

Deputy Presidents are usually the leaders of national party delegations (there are differences in the number of Deputy Presidents in each group). Their role is to help the President in his duties. Every group has its own Treasurer who is responsible for financial coordination of current activity of a group. In order to include into the Bureau the representatives of all political parties which form the faction the institution of a Member of the Bureau has been created. Smaller factions usually do not have such posts.

The working groups within the factions play an important professional role as preparatory bodies. They consist of deputies-experts who coordinate the work of deputies in the EP committees. For instance the PPE-DE Group has four working groups (A: foreign affairs, development, legal questions; B: economy, employment, regions, women's rights; C: budget, agriculture, fisheries; D: citizens' rights, culture, environment). Their conclusions are made known to the

⁶ F. Jacobs, R. Corbett, M. Shackleton, *op. cit.*, p. 87; S. Hix, Ch. Lord, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁷ URL <<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ppe/tree/group/en/default.htm>>.

⁸ F. Jacobs, R. Corbett, M. Shackleton, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁹ URL <http://www.db.europarl.eu.int/ep5/owa/p_meps.short_list>.

whole faction, which then decides what position to adopt in plenary sessions of the EP.¹⁰

Each and every political group has its own staff (the Secretariat) whose size depends on the number of the members of a faction and languages which are used within the group. The number of officers cannot exceed the number of deputies who belong to the group. The main part is the provisional staff recruited by the group or a single MEP. The duties of the staff include organisation of the current activity of the Bureau and the whole group, representatives of the group in the EP committees as well as public relations.¹¹

The most important element within political groups are national delegations which represent single national political parties. Their position is regulated in the statutes of each faction. Some delegations are assured formal representation in the Bureau of the group or the EP governing bodies. Large national delegations elect their own President, Treasurer etc. Sometimes they have their own staff and thus form a kind of sub-groups within the groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Political and national structure of the EP (October 2000)

	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IR	I	L	NL	A	P	SF	S	UK	Total
PPE-DE	6	1	53	9	28	21	5	34	2	9	7	9	5	7	37	233
PSE	5	3	32	9	24	22	1	16	2	6	7	12	3	6	30	178
ELDR	5	6	-	-	3	-	1	8	1	8	-	-	5	4	10	51
Verts/ALE	7	-	7	-	4	9	2	2	1	4	2	-	2	2	6	48
GUE/NGL	-	1	6	7	4	11	-	6	-	1	-	2	1	3	-	42
UEN	-	1	-	-	-	12	6	9	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	30
TDI	2	-	-	-	-	5	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
EDD	-	4	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	16
NI	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	5	-	-	-	1	9
Total	25	16	98	25	64	87	15	87	6	31	21	25	16	22	87	625

Source: URL <http://www.db.europarl.eu.int/ep5/owa/p_meps2.repartition?lg=EN>.

In the fifth term of the European Parliament there are eight political groups (as at October 2000). They differ from one another as for the number and size of national delegations. The review of their composition is the next part of this section.

The biggest faction – Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (PPE-DE) – was founded in 1953 as the Christian Democrat Group and then changed its name several times. The PPE-DE Group consists of 233 representatives of twenty-nine parties from fifteen EU countries. Its President is Hans-Gert Poettering (Germany/CDU) (Table 2).

¹⁰ URL <<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ppe/tree/group/en/grouptra.htm>>.

¹¹ See also: F. Jacobs, R. Corbett, M. Shackleton, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–89.

Table 2. Political structure of the PPE-DE Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Christelijke Volkspartij	Belgium	CVP
Parti Social Chretien	Belgium	PSC
Christliche Soziale Partei	Belgium	CSP
Det Konservative Folkeparti	Denmark	C
Christlich-Demokratische Union	Germany	CDU
Christlich-Soziale Union	Germany	CSU
Nea Dimokratia	Greece	ND
Partido Popular	Spain	PP
Unio Democratica de Catalunya	Spain	UDC
Democratie Liberale	France	DL
Rassemblement pour la Republique	France	RPR
Nouvelle Union pour la Democratie Française	France	Nouvelle UDF
Fine Gael	Ireland	FG
Centro Cristiano Democratici	Italy	CCD
Cristiano Democratici Uniti	Italy	CDU
Forza Italia	Italy	FI
Partito Pensionati	Italy	–
Partito Popolare Italiano	Italy	PPI
Rinnovamento Italiano	Italy	RI
Südtiroler Volkspartei	Italy	SVP
Unione Democratici per l'Europa	Italy	U.D. EUR
Parti Chretien Social	Luxembourg	PCS-CSV
Christen Demokratisch Appel	Netherlands	CDA
Österreichische Volkspartei	Austria	ÖVP
Partido Social Democata	Portugal	PSD
Kansallinen Kokoomus	Finland	KOK
Moderaterna	Sweden	M
Kristdemokraterna	Sweden	–
Conservative and Unionist Party	UK	Cons.

Source: URL < <http://www.europarl.eu.int/ppe/tree/site/en/default.htm> >.

The second biggest faction – Group of the Party of European Socialists (PSE) – was founded in 1953 as the Socialist Group and then changed its name. The PSE Group is composed of 178 members who represent eighteen national parties from fifteen EU countries. Its President is Enrique Baron Crespo (Spain/PSOE) (Table 3).

Three biggest groups (PPE-DE, PSE, ELDR) are connected with three transnational European political parties: European People's Party, Party of European Socialists and European Liberal, Democratic and Reform Party. Transnational parties are in fact federations of national parties which cooperate at the European level. They are composed of groups coming not only from the EU states but also from candidate countries. Their activity is to be seen at many scenes, e.g., the Council of Europe.¹²

¹² For more information see: J. Smith, *How European are European elections?*, [in:] *Political Parties and the European Union*, ed. by J. Gaffney, London–New York 1996, p. 279; S. Hix, Ch. Lord, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–197.

Table 3. Political structure of the PSE Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Parti Socialiste	Belgium	PS
Socialistische Partij	Belgium	SP
Socialdemokratiet	Denmark	A
Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Germany	SPD
Panellinio Socialistiko Kinima	Greece	PASOK
Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol	Spain	PSOE
Parti Socialiste	France	PS
Labour Party	Ireland	Lab.
Democratici di Sinistra	Italy	PDS
Socialisti Democratici Italiani	Italy	-
Parti Socialiste Ouvrier Luxembourggeois	Luxembourg	POSL
Partij van de Arbeid	Netherlands	PvdA
Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	Austria	SPÖ
Partido Socialista	Portugal	PS
Suomen Sosialdemokraattinen Puolue	Finland	SDP
Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet	Sweden	SAP
Labour Party	UK	Lab.
Social Democratic and Labour Party (N. Ireland)	UK	SDLP

Source: URL <<http://www.europarl.eu.int/pesEn/Contact/Family/default.htm>> .

Table 4. Political structure of the ELDR Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Parti Reformateur Liberal	Belgium	PRL
Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	Belgium	VLD
Venstre	Denmark	V
Det Radikale Venstre	Denmark	RV
Convergencia Democratica Catalunya	Spain	CDC
Partito Repubblicano Italiano	Italy	PRI
Val d'Aosta Union	Italy	-
Lega Nord	Italy	LN
Demokratesch Partei	Luxembourg	DP
Democraten 66	Netherlands	D'66
Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	Netherlands	VVD
Suomen Keskusta	Finland	KESK
Svenska Folkpartiet i Finland	Finland	SFP
Centerpartiet	Sweden	C
Folkpartiet Liberalerna	Sweden	FP
Liberal Democrats	UK	LD

Source: URL <<http://eld.europarl.eu.int./members.asp>> .

The fourth biggest group represents the Greens and the regionalists and is called the Greens/European Free Alliance (Verts/ALE). It was founded in 1989 as the Green Group. Now there are 48 members in the Verts/ALE Group. They come from nineteen parties of twelve EU countries. The group has two

Table 5. Political structure of the Verts/ALE Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Anders gaan leven	Belgium	Agalev
Ecolo	Belgium	ECOLO
Volksonie	Belgium	VU
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	Germany	Grüne
Partido Andalucista	Spain	–
Eusko Alkartasuna	Spain	–
Bloque Nacionalista Galego	Spain	–
Eusko Alderdi Jertzailea	Spain	–
Les Verts	France	–
The Green Party	Ireland	GP
Federazione dei Verdi	Italy	–
Dei Greng	Luxembourg	–
GroenLinks	Netherlands	–
Die Grünen	Austria	Grüne
Vihreä Liitto	Finland	VIHR
Miljöpartiet De Grona	Sweden	MP
Plaid Cymru	UK	–
Scottish National Party	UK	SNP
The Green Party	UK	–

Source: URL < <http://www.europarl.eu.int/greens-efa/group/who/members.htm> > .

Co-Presidents: Heidi Anneli Hautala (Finland/Vihre Liitto) and Paul A.A.J.G. Lannoye (Belgium/ECOLO) (Table 5).

The next group – Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) – was created in 1994. It represents communist and left-wing ecological parties. Having 42 members from fifteen parties of ten states GUE/NGL is the fifth largest faction in the EP. The President is Francis Wurtz (France/PCF) (Table 6).

Group of the Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN) represents the MEPs who assert that the European Union can only be built if sovereignty and national democracy are respected. It was formed in the present term of the Parliament. The UEN Group has 30 members who come from five parties and five countries. The President is Charles Pasqua (France/RPF) (Table 7).

The Technical Group of Independent Members – Mixed Group (TDI), formed in the present term of the EP, is composed of the MEPs whose main objective is to use the force that is given to a political group by the EP Rules of Procedure. The TDI Group has no common political platform but is represented in the EP governing bodies. Having 18 members from three parties and three countries it is not very influential. It has to be mentioned that 8 members of TDI do not come from any political party. The TDI Group has three Co-Presidents: Gianfranco Dell’Alba (Italy/non-party), Charles de Gaulle (France/FN) and Francesco Enrico Speroni (Italy/ LN) (Table 8).

Table 6. Political structure of the GUE/NGL Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Socialistisk Folkparti	Denmark	SF
Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus	Germany	PDS
DIKKI	Greece	–
Kommunistiko Komma Elladas	Greece	KKE
Synaspismos	Greece	Syn
Izquierda Unida	Spain	IU
Parti Communiste Français	France	PCF
Lutte Ouvriere	France	LO
Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire	France	LCR
Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	Italy	PdCI
Rifondazione Comunista	Italy	RC
Socialistische Partij	Netherlands	SP
Partido Comunista Portugues	Portugal	PCP
Vasemmistoliitto	Finland	VAS
Vänster Partiet	Sweden	VP

Source: URL < <http://www.europarl.eu.int/gue/tree/parties/en/Default.htm> > .

Table 7. Political structure of the UEN Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Dansk Folke Parti	Denmark	–
Rassemblement pour la France	France	RPF
Fianna Fail	Ireland	FF
Alleanza Nazionale-Patto	Italy	AN
Centro Democratico Social-Partido Popular	Portugal	CDS-PP

Source: URL < http://www.europarl.eu.int/uen/en/stru/M_stru_en.htm > .

Table 8. Political structure of the TDI Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Vlaams Blok	Belgium	–
Front National	France	FN
Lega Nord	Italy	LN

Source: URL < http://www.db.europarl.eu.int/ep5/owa/p_meps.short_list > .

The Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities (EDD), formed under this name in the present EP term, is composed of people who are critical of further European integration and centralisation. The EDD Group consists of 16 MEPs who represent five parties (or movements) from four states. It has three Co-Presidents: Johannes (Hans) Blokland (Netherlands/RPF/SGP/GPV), Jens Peter Bonde (Denmark/J) and Jean Saint-Josse (France/Chasse, Peche, Nature, Traditions) (Table 9).

Table 9. Political structure of the EDD Group

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
JuniBevagelsen	Denmark	J
Folkebevagelsen mod EU	Denmark	N
Chase, Peche, Nature, Traditions	France	–
Reformatorsch Politieke Federatie/SGP/GPV	Netherlands	RPF/SGP/GPV
United Kingdom Independence Party	UK	–

Source: URL <<http://www.europarl.eu.int/edd>> .

Nine MEPs are not included into any political group. They come from two political parties (or are non-party deputies) from five states. The influence of non-attached MEPs is rather small (Table 10).

Table 10. Political views of non-attached MEPs

National Party	Country	Abbreviation
Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Austria	FPÖ
Democratic Unionist Party	UK	DUP

Source: URL <http://www.wdb.europarl.eu.int/ep5/owa/p_meps.short_list> .

The internal structure of political groups in the European Parliament is a specific problem as they consist of national political parties which represent different political cultures and manifestoes. This fact is reflected in decision-making mechanism.

DECISION-MAKING ASPECT

This section is to characterise a sophisticated decision-making mechanism within political groups. The principles which govern the internal life of factions aimed at achieving the equilibrium of influences coming from member parties of a group. Members of a faction meet during a “group-week” (when there are no plenary sittings or committee meetings) or during the EP plenary sittings. The closed gatherings of all members of a group during a “group-week” are of a vital importance. They last two or three days when the position of a group at the next plenary sitting is being discussed. The MEPs who belong to national delegations or to the working groups meet parallelly. On the other hand, the meetings during the plenary sittings are not so important and have accessory character.¹³

National party delegations play a crucial role in decision-making process. Their positions are the basis for the common position of the whole faction. The

¹³ F. Jacobs, R. Corbett, M. Shackleton, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

second pillar of decision-making is created by working groups which prepare professional standpoints. The part of so-called “group coordinators” in the EP committees cannot be underestimated, either.

Decision procedures during gatherings of all members create a continuum: from unanimity in smaller groups to majority of votes (PPE-DE, PSE).¹⁴ The principles of the latter procedure are as follows:

- * efforts are made to make a decision on a consensus basis (without voting) after the voice given to every national delegation;

- * the institution of a “separate vote” is often used which means that a national delegation that constitutes the minority of the faction is allowed not to support the line of the faction but its position must be motivated;

- * the compromise is the best way to make a decision, e.g., the package-deal or “strategic voting” method (game theory) is put into practice in which every player has to give up some priorities in order to accomplish other goals.¹⁵

On the other hand, the leaders of factions are strongly interested in cohesion of the groups. Separate votes are an exceptional mechanism. Formal and informal pressures are used to achieve a high level of internal discipline. The most important formal way is to inflict a fine on a MEP who does not support the line of a group. In practice, however, fines are imposed only on the deputies who do not attend the sittings of the EP. The informal measures include deprivation of influential EP posts, exclusion from the list of speakers at plenary sittings or limitation of official business trips.¹⁶ The institution of a “whip” has been adopted from the British political system but his role is very limited. The main reason for this is the lack of registration of voting results. The other one is a strong connection of the MEPs with their national delegations. The “group whips” can do nothing if all the members of a national delegation are against them.¹⁷ These are the main grounds for the fact that internal cohesion of political groups is still very problematic. Our empirical analysis – published elsewhere¹⁸ – has proved that EP factions are very incohesive and tend to create very broad inter-faction coalitions.¹⁹ This is the main difference between national and EP party politics.

Decisions are made by political groups on the basis of a “committee decision-making” pattern explained by G. Sartori. This model helps in the

¹⁴ A. Dumała, *Spójność grup politycznych w Parlamencie Europejskim*, “Biuletyn Europejski UMCS”, 1996, pp. 57–58.

¹⁵ S. Hix, Ch. Lord, *op. cit.*, pp. 128, 153–154; As for theoretical base for “strategic voting” see: Z. J. Pietraś, *Decydowanie polityczne*, Warszawa–Kraków 1998, pp. 290–293.

¹⁶ S. Hix, Ch. Lord, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–136.

¹⁷ F. Jacobs, R. Corbett, M. Shackleton, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

¹⁸ P. Tosiek, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹⁹ See also: F. Attina, *The voting behaviour of the European Parliament members and the problem of the Europarties*, “European Journal of Political Research” 1990, no. 18, p. 569.

creation of “consensual decision-making structures” when the elites are not present or are being formed at the moment.²⁰ There is no doubt that political groups are practical counterparts of this theoretical concept. Their main objective is to keep transnational political actors alive while their cohesion and influence give place to this priority.

CONCLUSIONS

The formation of political groups in the European Parliament is a process that reflects specific background of inter-party relations. National parties cooperate on the basis of very strict formal regulations. They create political groups according to the three ways (ideological, organisational and mixed patterns). Decision-making process is rooted in a consensual mechanism where the elected governing bodies and national delegations play a crucial role.

One of the most important factors is the lack of an intra-group cohesion. This fact is caused mainly by the non-existence of the government-opposition system. Moreover, the factions are composed of fully-organised national parties which leads to the conflict of loyalties.²¹ The main problem therefore is the balance between national parties and EP political groups.

The inter-party cooperation is in a long run aimed at creating all-European political parties. Their embryos, transnationals: PPE, PSE and ELDR, have already been existing. However, their future role depends mainly on the way that will be adopted by the European Union. At the present stage of European integration the real Europarties are unlikely to appear.

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²⁰ S. Hix, Ch. Lord, *op. cit.*, p. 130; G. Sartori, *Teoria demokracji*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 281–288.

²¹ See also: D. Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, London 1993, p. 263.

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URL <<http://www.euoparl.eu.int/ppe/tree/site/en/default.htm>> .
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STRESZCZENIE

Parlament Europejski jest miejscem wymagającym współpracy ponad stu narodowych partii politycznych. Łączą się one w grupy polityczne, nazywane także frakcjami. Sposób tworzenia tych struktur – z uwagi na wielo- i transnarodowość – odbiega w znacznym stopniu od powstawania klubów parlamentarnych w legislatywach krajowych. Pierwszą płaszczyzną analizy tworzenia frakcji w PE jest poziom formalny, związany z wymaganiami stawianymi przez Regulamin Parlamentu Europejskiego, które sprawiają, że w praktyce grupy powstają według dwóch podstawowych wzorców: ideologicznego oraz organizacyjnego. Druga płaszczyzna badawcza odnosi się do poziomu strukturalnego. Wszystkie frakcje posiadają zbliżoną wewnętrzną strukturę zarządzającą, a podstawową rolę odgrywają w niej delegacje narodowych partii politycznych. Trzeci poziom analizy dotyczy procesów podejmowania decyzji wewnątrz frakcji. Mechanizmy decyzyjne wynikają z wymagań formalnych i struktury grup, a ich podstawową cechą jest wysoki stopień konsensualności. Przyszłość ogólnoeuropejskich partii politycznych, których załączkami są grupy polityczne w Parlamencie Europejskim, zależy w wielkim stopniu od kierunku rozwoju, jaki przyjmie Unia Europejska jako całość.