



ANALÝZA SILNEJÚCEJ ÚLOHY EURÓPSKEHO PARLAMENTU PO PRIJATÍ LISABONSKEJ ZMLUVY Z HĽADISKA TEÓRIE LIBERÁLNEHO INTERGOVERNMENTALIZMU

EXPLAINING THE STRENGTHENING ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AFTER THE LISBON TREATY: A LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

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Teória liberálneho intergovernmentalizmu je jedna z najvýznamnejších integračných teórií, ktorou sa často vysvetľuje vznik a rozvoj Európskej únie. Teóriu vyvinul Andrew Moravcsik. Integráciu chápe ako výsledok medzinárodného vyjednávanía, v ktorom hlavnú úlohu hrajú vlády. Každá národná vláda má svoje preferencie, pričom jej cieľom vo vyjednávaní s národnými vládami iných členských štátov EÚ je presadzovať tieto preferencie, aby sa stala silnejšou a kompetentnejšou. Je preto dôležité analyzovať, prečo sa členské štáty rozhodli posilniť kompetencie Európskeho parlamentu (EP), a aké záujmy sledujú zvýšením právomocí tejto nadnárodnej inštitúcie na úroveň Rady EÚ. Tu sa vynára otázka: Do akej miery dokáže teória liberálneho intergovernmentalizmu vysvetliť posilnenú úlohu Európskeho parlamentu po vstupe Lisabonskej zmluvy do platnosti?

Kľúčové slová: liberálny, medzivládny, Európska únia, Európsky parlament, Zmluva z Nice, Lisabonská zmluva.

The Liberal Intergovernmental theory is one of the most important integration theories explaining the creation and development of the European Union. Andrew Moravcsik developed this theory, which perceived the integration as an outcome of international bargaining, whereas the governments played the key role. The national governments associated with it have a clear and specific point of view about their preferences and pursue these preferences in bargaining with other member states so that this bargaining is in accordance with becoming more powerful and with greater competence. It is therefore

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relevant to explain why these member states decided to strengthen the European Parliament (EP), and what their interests are in making the European Parliament, a supranational institution, as powerful as the Council. Hence the question which arises here: To what extent can the Liberal Intergovernmentalism explain the strengthening role of the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty?

Key words: liberal, intergovernmental, European Union, European Parliament, Treaty of Nice, Lisbon Treaty.

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1 INTRODUCTION

It is relevant to try to understand the nature of the European Union through several theories. There are many theories which were developed to explain the creation and development of the EU, and Liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) is one of them. *Andrew Moravcsik* developed this theory, which perceived the integration as an outcome of international bargaining where the governments played the key role. The national governments associated with it all have a clear and specific point of view about their preferences and pursue them in bargaining with other member states so that this bargaining is in accordance with their states' interests. Hence, it doesn't seem clear why member states of the EU decided to strengthen the European Parliament (EP), and what their interest was in making the European Parliament, a supranational institution, as powerful as the Council is.

After the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has become more powerful, with greater competency. The present paper focuses on two main questions: (1) To what extent can Liberal Intergovernmentalism explain the strengthening of the role of the European Parliament? (2) Is Moravcsik's theory still alive after the Lisbon Treaty, or should we bid good-bye to Liberal Intergovernmentalism?

Treaties are an indispensable tool used in unification of any union, and are therefore necessary for the existence of the European Union. The integration process is becoming bigger and bigger day by day, so to control this process and keep working in the most effective way possible, many projects have been undertaken. Treaties are parts of these projects, as they determine the European Union's objectives and they explain and decide how decisions should be made. The Lisbon Treaty, which is one of the most important treaties, was put into effect in October 2009 to increase the influence of democracy and its efficiency in the EU. Many changes were introduced by the treaty, and the changes which took place have strengthened the role of the European Parliament by changing voting procedures in the Council, creating a new High Representative for Foreign Affairs, holding a position of permanent President of the European Council, and much more.

The present paper will concentrate on the changes affecting the European Parliament. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has got more legislative powers, more budgetary influence, and more co-decision powers in decision-making. Earlier, no treaty could enter into force without the member states' approval. Hence a question arises here: "Why did the member states accept to strengthen a supranational institution which could weaken their power?" And while examining the changes undertaken by the Lisbon Treaty from the Liberal Intergovernmental perspective, there seems to be a contradiction. Liberal Intergovernmentalism emphasizes that all powers should be in the hands of member states and if any changes are introduced, they should meet the member states' interests. However, it is not clear what the hidden interest might be, which has given the European Parliament more powers than before. This is the puzzle which this paper will try to explain.

The method used in this paper is a descriptive approach. The first part will present the basics of the Moravcsik Liberal Intergovernmentalism theory while the second part will focus on the Lisbon Treaty, then moving on to the European Parliament. It also compares the European Parliament's competences before and after the Lisbon Treaty. The next section focuses on the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty came into force. Here we can link these parts with our main question written above and can analyze this literature. Hence we will be able to analyze some of the bargaining among the EU member states, focusing on the reason behind it in order to see whether it matches the Moravcsik theory. The findings of this part will be used to determine the result of our study.

The hypothesis of this research is that more power granted to the European Parliament has affected the institutional balance in the European Union, which has resulted in the weakening of the role of the member states in the Union. This hypothesis contradicts the Liberal Intergovernmentalism theory, which says that every action is done by member states according to their interests.

2 LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM

In the 1960s, Stanley Hoffmann presented ideas of intergovernmentalism in order to explain the interstate government on the EU level within a realistic framework. Hence, the rational egoist nature of the states was still to be assumed. The main new feature in Hoffmann's theories was the differentiation between *high* and *low* politics; the former referred to foreign policy and national security while the latter pertained to 'softer' issues such as trade and agriculture. Due to this, in 1993, Andrew Moravcsik presented a softer variant of the intergovernmentalist framework. This liberal intergovernmentalist approach was further developed in his book *The Choice for Europe* (1998), which is also based on the assumption that states are rational actors. Two features which were identified and emphasized are: the importance of economic

interests, and the ‘opening of the black box’ of internal policy preparations (Larsson 2010, p. 8).

The central argument of Moravcsik’s theory is as follows: “European integration can best be understood as a series of rational choices made by national leaders. These choices responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of each state in the international system, and the role of institutions in bolstering the credibility of interstate commitments” (Moravcsik 1998, p. 18).

The framework of Moravcsik’s theory includes three phases (Table 1): national preference formation, interstate bargaining and institutional choice (Laursen 2008, p. 6).

2.1 National preference formation

In the first stage, the national chiefs of government aggregate the interests of the domestic constituencies, as well as their own interests, and articulate their respective national preference towards the EU. National preferences are complex, reflecting the distinctive economics, parties and institutions of each member state, and they are determined domestically, not shaped by participation in the EU (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 20). The economic interests dominate when the national preferences of member states are formed (Laursen 2008, p. 6).

2.2 Interstate bargaining

The second stage, interstate bargaining, seeks to explain the efficiency and distributional outcomes of EU negotiations. Here, two possible explanations of agreements on substance are contrasted: asymmetrical interdependence, and supranational entrepreneurship (Laursen 2008, p. 7). According to Moravcsik, the relative power among states is shaped above all by asymmetrical interdependence, which dictates the relative value of agreement to different governments (the second element in the theory emphasizes the centrality of strategic bargaining among states and the importance of governmental elites in shaping interstate relations). At this point, states are considered unitary actors, and supranational institutions are deemed to have a very limited impact on outcomes (Cini 2007, p. 111). Moravcsik emphasized the hardball bargaining among member states and the importance of bargaining power, package deals, and side payments as determinants of intergovernmental bargains on the most important EU decisions (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 20).

2.3 Institutional choice

Moravcsik puts forward a rational choice theory of institutional choice, arguing that the EU member states adopt particular EU institutions, pooling sovereignty through qualified majority voting, or delegating sovereignty to

supranational actors like the Commission and the Court in order to increase the credibility of their mutual commitments (Wallace 2010, p. 20). Moravcsik contrasts three possible explanations to explain the institutional choice: “federalist ideology, centralized technocratic management or credible commitment” (Laursen 2008, p. 7).

Hence the sovereign states that are seeking to cooperate among themselves invariably face a strong temptation to defect from their agreement by pooling and delegating sovereignty through international organizations. Moravcsik further argues that this allows states to commit themselves credibly to their mutual promise by monitoring state compliance with international agreements and filling in the blanks of board international treaties, such as those that have constituted the EC/EU (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 20).

Table 1: International Cooperation: A Rationalist Framework:

Stages	National Preference Formation	Interstate Bargaining	Institutional Choice
Alternative independent variables underlying each stage	What is the source of underlying national preferences?	Given national preferences what explains the efficiency and distributional outcomes of interstate bargaining?	Given substantive agreement, what explains the transfer of sovereignty to international institutions?
	Economic interests or Geopolitical interests?	Asymmetrical interdependence or Supranational entrepreneurship?	Federalist ideology or Centralized technocratic management or More credible commitment?
Observed outcomes at each stage	Underlying national preferences	Agreements on substance	Choice to delegate or pool decision-making in international institutions

Source: Moravcsik (1998, p. 24).

Based on the above, Moravcsik concluded that the major choices made in favor of European integration were a reflection of the preferences of national governments and not of supranational organizations. He stressed that these national preferences reflected a balance of domestic economic interests, rather than any political bias of politicians or national strategy security concerns. Finally, he stressed that the outcomes of the negotiations reflected the relative bargaining power of the states, and that the delegation of decision-making authority to supranational institutions reflected the

wishes of governments to ensure that commitments made were adhered to (Cini 2007, p. 112).

3 THE TREATY OF NICE

The Treaty of Nice was negotiated by the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), which ran throughout most of the year 2000. The European Council in Nice concluded the negotiations in December 2000. This treaty introduced a number of institutional changes to the EU. The changes were related to further enlargements, which took membership to 25 in May 2004 (Laursen 2006, p. 1).

The Amsterdam Treaty set the number of European Parliament members at 700. The Nice Treaty has amended Article 189 of the Treaty, empowering the European Community (EC Treaty) to increase the maximum number of European Parliament members to 732. The aim of the Treaty of Nice was to prepare the European institutions for the next European Union enlargement. As a result, it includes provisions which can be adapted to different potential scenarios (EUROPA 2007).

3.1 The Treaty of Nice and the European Parliament

We can divide the competences which were given to the European Parliament by the Treaty of Nice into three areas: legislative competences, budgetary competences, and some other responsibilities. The role of the European Parliament in the legislative process has expanded over time. More decisions within the Council of Ministers of the EU have become subject to qualified majority voting rather than unanimous voting to allow for greater speed and efficiency of decision-making. The European Parliament has come to be viewed as an increasingly important democratic counterweight at the European level to the European Commission and the Council. Additional policy areas range from the environment to social policy, but the tax matters and foreign policy are among the areas to which the co-decision procedure does not apply (Archick 2006, p. 2).

Regarding the budgetary competences, the European Parliament and the Council exercise joint powers in determining the EU's annual budget of nearly 100 billion euros. The budgetary procedure begins with the European Commission proposing a preliminary draft budget to the Council. The Council prepares another draft, which the European Parliament may approve or modify upon its first reading. On the compulsory expenditures (mainly agriculture), the Council currently has the final say, but the European Parliament has the last word on non-compulsory expenditures such as structural funds and developmental aids (Archick 2006, pp. 2-3).

The Parliament also plays a supervisory role over the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. The European Parliament votes for the European Commission program and monitors the management of EU policies, in particular through oral and written questions to the European Commission and the Council. The

European Parliament also has the right to dismiss the entire European Commission through a vote of censure, and has the power to accept or reject a newly proposed commission as a whole, rather than an individual nominee. In addition to that, the European Parliament must approve the accession of new EU member states and the conclusion of all official agreements with third parties, such as association and trade agreements with non-member states (Archick 2006, p. 3).

There are three other important additions to the powers of the European Parliament. The standing of the European Parliament before the European Court of Justice has improved in two significant ways (Laursen 2006, p. 362): The European Parliament has been given equal status with the Council, the European Commission and the member states to challenge the legality of an act before the European Court of Justice (Article 230 TEC). It also has equal status with the Council and European Commission in seeking an opinion from the European Court of Justice about the validity of international agreements (Article 300 (6) TEC). Finally, the Parliament's right of initiative was extended. The European Parliament may now take the initiative in charging a member state with a breach of fundamental rights – by a two-thirds majority (Article 7, 1 TEC).

3.2 Powers of the European Parliament before the Lisbon Treaty

We can summarize the main powers of the European Parliament before the Lisbon Treaty in seven main points:

Consultation

The European Commission's proposals to the Council are passed to the European Parliament for an opinion. The European Parliament may suggest alteration, delay passing a resolution to formalize its opinion, or refer matters back to its relevant committee(s) (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 83).

The consultation procedure is usually used for limited policies relating primarily to agricultural and competition policy as well as issues of police and judicial asylum, visas, or immigration (Bomberg et al. 2008, p. 6).

Cooperation (Art. 252 TEC, ex Art. 189c EEC)

The European Commission proposals can be passed to Council for a “common position” and to the European Parliament for the first reading, in which it may propose amendments. The European Parliament may, at its second reading, seek to amend the Council's common position, or by an absolute majority reject it. The Council can override the European Parliament's rejection only by unanimity. Alternatively, the European Parliament and Council can try to negotiate an agreement in a conciliation procedure.

The procedure applies to limited aspects of economic and monetary union (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 83).

Co-decision (Art.251 TEC, ex Art. 189b EEC)

Under co-decision, the European Parliament formally shares legal responsibility for legislation with the Council of Ministers. The Parliament and the Council must enter in to direct negotiations (Bomberg et al. 2008, p. 6). The Council and the European Parliament may both agree to a proposal at first reading (in 2008, almost three quarters of relevant issues). If they disagree at the second reading, the European Parliament may, with an absolute majority, reject the proposal. As an alternative, the European Parliament may amend the Council's common position by an absolute majority, in which case conciliation takes place between the Council and the European Parliament. The results of conciliation must be approved in third reading by both Council (qualified majority vote) and Parliament (the majority of votes cast). If not agreed upon, the proposal is not approved (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 83).

This procedure applies since the Treaty of Amsterdam (ToA) to most areas of legislation, unless otherwise specified as exempted, or falling under one of the other procedures (Wallace et al. 2010, p. 83).

Assent

The European Parliament has to approve some of the major decisions concerning international treaties – most EU cohesion funding, and enlargement. The European Parliament cannot add amendments to these proposals. In most cases, the Parliament must give its assent by an absolute majority. No decision can be made without the Parliament's approval (Bomberg et al. 2008, p. 6).

Budget (arts. 272-3, ex Arts. 203-4 EEC)

The European Parliament may try to modify compulsory expenditure, or to amend "non-compulsory" expenditure. It must approve the budget as a whole, and subsequently must "discharge" the accounts of the previous year's actual expenditure (Wallace et al. 2010, p.83).

Installation of Commission (Art.214 (2) TEC, ex Art. 158(2) EEC)

Since the time of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the European Parliament has had the right to approve nomination of the European Commission's president. It holds individual hearings with nominated commissioners and passes a vote to approve the whole college (Wallace et al. 2010, p.83).

Censure of Commission (Art. 201 TEC, ex Art. 144 EEC)

The European Parliament may censure the college of commissioners by a two-thirds majority of its members (Wallace et al. 2010, p.83).

4 THE TREATY OF LISBON

The Lisbon Treaty, or “the Reform Treaty”, is an international agreement that amends the two treaties, which comprise the constitutional basis of the European Union (EU). It amends the treaty on the European Union, the “Maastricht Treaty”, and the treaty establishing the European Community, the “Treaty of Rome” (Council of the European Union 2014).

The Lisbon Treaty came into force on December 1st, 2009. Under EU rules, the treaty had to be ratified by all 27 member states before coming into power. The last country to ratify the treaty was the Czech Republic, which completed the process in November 2009. Like the proposed European constitution preceding it, the treaty is often described as an attempt to streamline EU institutions to make the enlarged bloc of 27 states function better. But its opponents see it as a part of a federalist agenda that threatens national sovereignty. The planned constitution was thrown out by French and Dutch voters in 2005. The Lisbon Treaty which succeeded it was rejected by Irish voters in June 2008. However, it got an overwhelming support in the second referendum in the Irish Republic which took place several months later, in October 2009.

With regard to the institutional clauses (part 1 of the “Constitution”), the Lisbon Treaty bears the following clauses (Foundation Robert Schuman 2007):

- the European Union becomes a legal entity;
- the three pillars are merged together;
- a new rule of double majority is introduced;
- affirmation of the co-decision rule between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers as the ordinary legislative procedure;
- a stable presidency of the European Council (for a duration of two and a half years) renewable once;
- creation of a position of “High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy”;
- introduction of the citizens’ initiative right;
- enhancement of democratic participation, etc.

4.1 Aims and Values of the European Union

The Lisbon Treaty’s importance comes from being a treaty that emphasizes the EU values and aims, such as peace, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. The Lisbon Treaty guarantees that the EU will give more freedom to the citizens and

provides them with the security they need. Moreover, the EU tries to enhance the economy and guarantee the citizens price stability, employment, and a high level of health care. The Lisbon Treaty ensures that the EU promotes social justice. By Lisbon treaty the EU insists on being in the union and loyalty to the euro. At the same time, one of the EU's tasks is to promote the EU's values and keep the peace, as it enhances free trade and fights poverty (European Commission 2009, p. 3).

4.2 Functions of the Treaty of Lisbon

The Lisbon Treaty brings the member states closer together and emphasizes the meaning of real citizens of the EU through more independence for the EU. It has a unique constitutional structure that makes the European people real EU citizens; therefore, as a result of this treaty people in the EU have national citizenship in addition to their European citizenship. Moreover, after the Lisbon Treaty the EU entered into agreements with other countries, in addition to the fact that the Lisbon Treaty has provided the European Union with the foreign minister, the president and the security policy (Coughlan 2008).

The Lisbon Treaty divides the powers of the EU into areas of exclusive European powers; here, the decisions which include monetary policy, trade, fishery, and issues related to internal market are taken only by the EU. Moving to shared European powers, this means that decisions are taken by sharing between member states and the EU in areas such as environment, transport, energy, employment and social policies. The third area of powers is the common European Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); according to the Lisbon Treaty, this area shall include all foreign and defense policies. Another important area is the area of supporting and coordinating EU-wide actions such as tourism, education, sport, and health culture. Also, the treaty has made changes to the voting system. Qualified majority voting for European law-making is set at 15 out of the 27 states² covering 65% of the total European Union population (Coughlan 2008).

Extensive law-making power was delegated to the EU in a large number of areas including immigration, energy, transport, EU budget and sport. After the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, it was legally binding that the EU has the power to clarify the rights in the EU law (Art. 6 TEU).

Finally, the Lisbon Treaty emphasizes that the EU member states should work on improving their military forces. The Treaty states that “if a member state is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other member states shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all means in their power” (Art: 28A.7).

² In July 2013, Croatia became the 28th EU member.

4.3 The European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty

The European Parliament is a supranational EU institution, the only institution that is directly elected by the EU citizens. By bringing the Lisbon Treaty into force, the European Parliament has attained more powers, more competences and more budgetary powers. The procedure called “co-decision” between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers has gained on importance since adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, as new policy areas have been included in the parliamentary competences (for example, the security and justice areas). This means the Parliament has acquired more legislative powers. In addition, the Parliament now also has its say in the EU budget (European Commission 2009, p. 12).

The Lisbon Treaty has given the European Parliament more power to shape Europe than ever before. The powers of the European Parliament are strengthened in terms of legislation, budget and also political control, which marks a real step forward in terms of democratization of the European Union (Foundation Robert Schuman 2007).

4.4 Legislative power

Through the Lisbon Treaty more legislative powers have been transferred to the European Parliament (Kurpas et al. 2007). More equality is now found in both the European Parliament and the European Council, which indicates stronger position of the European Parliament. More areas are under the jurisdiction of the Parliament – forty new areas are under the parliamentary competences (Kurpas et al. 2007, pp. 7-8). Parliament has no power to initiate legislation – this power remains with the European Commission. However, the European Parliament frequently adopts, at the instigation of one of its committees, reports designed to steer EU policy in a particular direction. They are called own-initiative reports and are not legally binding, although the European Commission is required to take a position on such reports (EU Civil Society Contact Group 2009).

The most important consequences of the European Union’s new legislative capacity are more “quantitative,” which means the European Parliament might suffer “qualitatively”. This has resulted in a decrease of the positive impact of the legislative procedure and of the Parliament as a whole. Nevertheless, the European Parliament can protect itself from this negative impact by internal reforms. Moreover, Parliament committees should be examined and streamlined. The number of these sub-committees could be increased. More organizations within these committees are required. A longer period of working time for these committees should be made mandatory (Kurpas et al. 2007, pp. 7-8).

4.5 Budgetary power

Under the Lisbon Treaty, Articles 268 and 279 emphasize the “co-decision” procedure between the European Parliament and the European Council in questions of the EU budget. The European Parliament has the final word in adopting the EU annual budget (Kurpas et al. 2007, pp. 7-8).

The Lisbon Treaty has made many changes in the annual EU budget. Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, it was the European Council which was responsible for taking the decision on what is called the “compulsory” expenditure and the European Parliament had the right to decide over what was called “non-compulsory” expenditure. Now that the Lisbon Treaty has entered into force, this procedure has been worked out, and the European Parliament has the right to say its word on most expenditures in the annual budget. According to the “co-decision” procedure, the European Parliament and the European Council now both decide on the Commission’s budget proposals (EU Civil Society Contact Group 2009).

In the European Parliament’s reassessment of the balance of budgetary powers it was concluded that the role of the European Council was to stay within the limits of the multi-annual framework budget (Kurpas et al. 2007, pp. 7-8).

4.6 Supervisory power (political control)

The European Parliament’s supervisory powers over the European Commission have increased after the Lisbon Treaty, as more accountability to the European Commission can be questioned by the European Parliament. The European Parliament has a vital role in the appointment of the new Commission and the appointment of the European Commission’s president (Archick 2006, pp. 4-5).

The European Parliament’s supervisory powers include economic and monetary control. Parliament has a supervisory role over the European Commission and also exercises some limited oversight over the activities of the Council of Ministers. More powers to the European Parliament have been granted to accept or reject a proposal of the European Commission as a whole. In addition, the European Parliament elects the President of the European Commission on the basis of the European Council recommendations (Europe Media Public Service Corporation 2013).

5 APPLICATION OF THE THEORY – PREFERENCE FORMATION AND INTERSTATE BARGAINING

Within the negotiation process to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, a lot of bargaining between the member states occurred.

The United Kingdom emphasized a number of issues which it considered red lines and non-negotiable questions. These were the issues related to “labor and social legislation; foreign and defense policy; police and judicial processes; the tax and social

security system; and national security”. The government asked to continue United Kingdom’s sovereignty and independence in these areas (UK Parliament 2008).

Poland, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands called for creating “a new mechanism that would allow a group of governments to request that powers should be returned to the member states from the EU institutions” (Taylor 2007). In addition to that, Poland objected to the voting system, which gave more power to large states (such as Germany), and weakened the small and medium-sized European member states. Italy was not satisfied with reducing the number of its seats in the European Parliament (from 78 to 72). Despite Italy agreeing to this decision later, it remained unhappy about losing its parity with France (74 seats) and the United Kingdom (73 seats) (Carbone 2009, pp. 50-52).

As a result of the failure of the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, and to prevent any future failures, a number of contentious prior issues has been discussed again. In France, Nicolas Sarkozy emphasized that “the excessive neo-liberal dimension of the ‘New Europe’ was one of the key reasons behind French voters’ rejection of the constitutional treaty.” The Netherlands called to increase democracy in the new treaty by means of ensuring citizen initiatives through the national parliament, and increasing the role of European parliament in monitoring the application of the subsidiarity principle (Carbone 2009, p.56). Poland's Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski said he “was ready to die for a greater influence of Poland in the EU's decision making”, he demanded a square root system for Poland and small countries in order to give them the same influence as larger countries, based on the 2003 Treaty of Nice. But their demand was dismissed by nearly all other EU members (Dujisin 2007). Some extra concessions – an energy solidarity clause and a permanent position of advocate-general in the European Court of Justice – contributed to appeasing the Polish government (Carbone 2009, p.57).

Finally, from the viewpoint of the smaller member states such as Malta, Slovenia, and Latvia, “the Lisbon Treaty has come as a step forward in the affirmation of a powerful voice within EU institutions by all its members.” So the smaller member states supported the increase in power of the European Parliament and the national legislative bodies, because it provides these states with more power in decision-making and more ability in making their voices and those of their citizens heard within the EU (Corpadean 2009, p.1175).

6 RESULTS

As can be seen from the present paper, in practice, the Liberal Intergovernmental theory is unable to explain the strengthened role of the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty.

The European Parliament is a supranational institution, and after the Lisbon Treaty it has got a huge amount of competences and has become more powerful than ever before. More power for this European institution means more supranationalism.

A number of changes in the treaty mean that the EU will become more supranational. More power has been given to the supranational institutions such as the EU Commission. The European Parliament's power is greatly increased by the new proposal. Up until now, the European Parliament had only real influence or co-decision powers in certain areas. As a result of the Lisbon Treaty, the ministers in the Council and the members of the European Parliament share legislative powers in many more fields. A proposed law can only be adopted if the two bodies are in agreement. Each body adopts its own proposal. More often, the Council and the European Parliament reach a compromising agreement in negotiations — a legislative reconciliation. The European Parliament's right to co-decision has been extended by the Lisbon treaty to about 50 new areas. This logically means that the influence of the member states in the Council has been limited. The national governments, and indirectly their parliaments, must now share their powers with the European Parliament. Additionally, individual countries lose power when the Union is given the right to decide in more areas and the right of veto disappears (Sjöstedt 2007, p.7).

According to the Moravcsik's theory (Liberal Intergovernmentalism), the justification of the transfer of sovereignty to the EU level might lie in the economic interests. But in practice we did not find any convincing economic arguments which could justify the transfer of sovereignty and the strengthening role of the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty. In reality, when participating in interstate negotiations, it appears that member states do not always have a clearly defined set of preferences. This also implies a certain amount of uncertainty during the negotiations, which makes it impossible to define the bargaining space.

The main aim of the Lisbon Treaty has been to fully integrate the new member states into the European integration and reconciliation project that started in the beginning of the 1950s. It enhances efficiency of the decision-making process. Since there are new members, it seems appropriate to avoid the dangers of stalemate and yet guarantee the legitimacy of decisions. Its principal aim is to improve the efficiency of the European Union's institutions and make them more democratic.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that there has been no consensus between the European states about the strengthening role of the European Parliament. The smaller European countries support the increase of powers of the European Parliament to create a higher likelihood of making their voices and those of their citizens heard within the EU. Other European states accepted this idea, but without visible enthusiasm. Maybe the strengthened role of the European Parliament is an indication of future reforms to come, which might increase the role of other EU institutions as well.

7 CONCLUSION

After years of success in explaining the process of European integration, Moravcsik's theory (Liberal Intergovernmentalism) got exposed to crisis when some European supranational institutions (like the European Parliament) became more powerful. We can notice that the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty *became more powerful than ever before*. The powers of the European Parliament were strengthened (as we said before) in terms of legislation, budget and also political control, which marks a real step forward in terms of the democratization of the European Union. And in practice, more power for the European institutions means more supranationalism.

According to Moravcsik, the national preferences reflect a balance of domestic economic interests, rather than any political bias of politicians or national strategy security concerns. The negotiations reflect the relative bargaining power of the states, and the delegation of decision-making authority to supranational institutions reflects the wishes of governments to ensure that any commitments made were adhered to. Therefore, the justification of the transfer of sovereignty to the EU level is the economic interest / preference. But in practice, no convincing economic interest which justifies the transfer of sovereignty could be found. Moreover, as we saw in the previous sections, there has been no consensus between the EU member states related to the strengthening role of the European Parliament. Only the smallest European states support the increase of powers of the European Parliament to get a higher likelihood of making their voices and those of their citizens heard within the EU. Nevertheless, other European states accepted this without any protests.

It can therefore be concluded that the Liberal Intergovernmental theory is unable to explain the strengthening role of the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty. The increase of the powers of the European Parliament is a retreat of the Liberal Intergovernmental theory in favor of the supranational theory, and the Lisbon Treaty (which plays a vital role in strengthening the European Parliament) is continuously playing its role in the European integration process which started nearly 50 years ago, and has been continuously strengthening the role of the EU institutions.

Thus our conclusion confirms the paper's hypothesis.

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