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Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU)

The Politics of Differentiated Integration: What do
Governments Want? Country Report – Belgium (FR)

Fabio Cescon

European University Institute

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Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU) is a Horizon 2020 funded research project aimed at contributing concretely to the current debate on the 'Future of Europe' by assessing, developing and testing a range of models and scenarios for different levels of integration among EU member states. InDivEU begins from the assumption that managing heterogeneity and deep diversity is a continuous and growing challenge in the evolution of the EU and the dynamic of European integration.

The objective of InDivEU is to maximize the knowledge of Differentiated Integration (DI) on the basis of a theoretically robust conceptual foundations accompanied by an innovative and integrated analytical framework, and to provide Europe's policy makers with a knowledge hub on DI. InDivEU combines rigorous academic research with the capacity to translate research findings into policy design and advice.

InDivEU comprises a consortium of 14 partner institutions coordinated by the Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute, where the project is hosted by the European Governance and Politics Programme (EGPP). The scientific coordinators of InDivEU are Brigid Laffan (Robert Schuman Centre) and Frank Schimmelfennig (ETH Zürich).

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**Integrating
Diversity in the
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Abstract

This report analyses the salience and overall position of the Belgian government on issues of European Integration between 2004 and 2020. The material analysed consists of mainly speeches and debates from institutional actors at the federal level; other Belgian governmental instances have been excluded from the analysis. The analysis showed that DI is a low salience issue in Belgium, possibly due to the government's instability and the overall pro-EU stance of the country. The Belgian government has taken a positive stance towards a multi-speed Europe, especially in the post-Brexit debates. This solution is described as allowing different MS to pursue different interests, while still working towards the EU integration project. A notable contentious issue amongst Belgian federal parties has been the Financial Transaction Tax, notably over the possible unfair consequences on competition that this tax would bring about.

Keywords

Differentiated Integration, Belgium, EU policy, Multi-Speed Europe.

Summary of Results

I. Saliency

In general, DI is not commonly present in Belgian political debates, strongly suggesting that DI is a low saliency issue. At the height of the sovereign debt crisis there were some discussions on the Financial Transaction Tax and the European Stability Mechanism but overall the saliency remains low. On the one hand, this low saliency could be a result of national matters monopolising the political agenda and the relative instability of Belgian governments (including a formation period of record length). On the other hand, the low saliency of DI could also be driven by Belgium's overall pro-EU stance, which becomes apparent when studying references to the EU in general in Belgian political rhetoric. Whenever DI mechanisms are discussed, enhanced cooperation is more commonly concerned than opt-outs. Among the DI instances, those most referred to include the Pesco agreement and the Schengen area.

II. Position

Our quantitative and qualitative analyses of the positions of Belgian governments and opposition parties on DI demonstrate two things. First, on average there appears to be a broad consensus among government and opposition parties on their positions towards DI, namely that by itself DI is not considered a desirable end but it could be a viable means for the EU to move forward. This position became especially clear in the post-Brexit debates, where a multi-speed EU was considered a solution to a passive EU. This was only an option if moving forward collectively was not possible. As such, it was seen as a necessity. Second, there is only one instance of DI that has split the opposition and government in Belgium: the Financial Transaction Tax. While the opposition (PS and Greens) pushed for enhanced cooperation on European taxes, the government expressed concerns over unfair competition if this tax was put forward through DI.

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1. Introduction

This report investigates the salience of differentiated integration (DI) in Belgian government discourse between 2004 and 2020. It also probes into the position of Belgian governments on the issue of DI in selected years (2008, 2012, 2017-2020).

Regarding DI salience, the results are based on document analysis. The material analysed included government programmes, Prime Minister's speeches, Prime Minister's European Council statements and parliamentary debates, which were analysed in this order. Appendix 1 provides an overview of all the documents analysed. The salience of DI in these documents was assessed by counting appearances of DI-related keywords (Appendix 2). The assumption is that the more a government talks about DI, the more relevant it is. While keyword counts in government programmes and PM speeches show the salience of DI at specific moments in time, the analysis of parliamentary debates allows us to identify trends over time and situational peaks. The list of keywords reflects three levels of abstraction. First, we ask if governments talk about DI at a conceptual level, i.e. by discussing the advantages and pitfalls of different models of DI. Second, we ask to what extent governments talk about specific DI mechanisms, such as enhanced cooperation or opt-outs from community policies. Finally, we ask what the differentiated policy fields which governments talk about most often are. Besides instances of enhanced cooperation and opt-outs from community policies, the report also looks at instances of inter se agreements and external agreements.

Regarding the government's position, the results are based on a manual sentiment analysis of parliamentary debates. To this end, references to DI keywords in parliamentary debates were manually coded as positive, neutral or negative. Belgium's multilingualism created a challenge in the collection and coding of the DI preferences of parties and governments. To clarify, the analysis was conducted primarily using the French language. However, all official Belgian documents are by default archived in both Dutch and French. MPs have the right to express themselves in one of the national languages (mainly Dutch and French) whereas the transcriptions of official documents present the original speech as stated in Parliament with a translation in the other language. Sometimes the translations were not fully presented but in shortened versions, which influenced the data collection. Sometimes fragments of Dutch text were used in the analysis, although generally French was the main language. Sometimes, a translation in the other language was not present, forcing the author to code the Dutch text, with the ensuing complications.

The codes presented in the guidelines were sometimes difficult to find in the selected documents as paraphrases were used instead of standardised expressions (see Appendix 2). Sometimes English, Dutch and French expressions were used variably in the same discourse, further making the data collection difficult. When addressing international audiences, Belgian political figures expressed themselves in the three national languages (Dutch, French, German) adding paragraphs in English. Almost no uniform transcriptions were found, which further complicated the data collection. Moreover, sometimes translations from Dutch to French would change the meaning of the references, for instance 'Europa à la carte' was translated into French as 'Europe à deux vitesses' [two-speed Europe]. The linguistic difference influenced the available documents too, for example for 'futur de l'Europe' only three documents appear, whereas 15 documents appear when searching for 'toekomst van Europa.'

2. How salient is DI for Belgian governments?

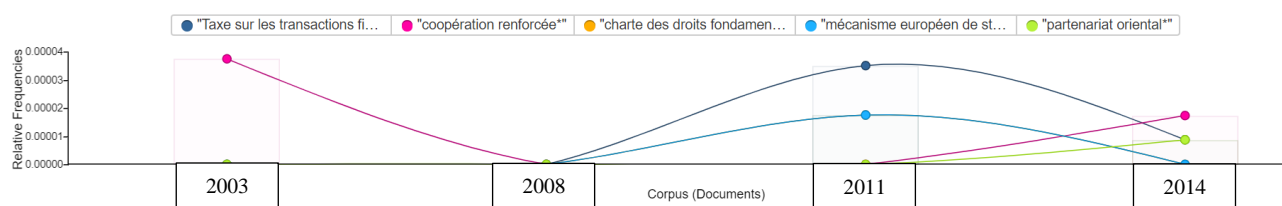
Our analysis of the salience of DI in Belgian government discourse includes three levels of abstraction: DI models, DI mechanisms and DI instances. As in the other reports, we combine various methods to graph the salience of DI, including computer-assisted word counts, manual word counts and holistic grading. When necessary, we also closely read the documents. We analysed different types of documents, including a) government programmes, b) Prime Minister speeches, c) Prime Minister

European Council statements and d) parliamentary debates. The analysis proceeds from the more general (i.e. government programmes) to the more specific (i.e. council statements/parliamentary debates) data sources. In the following paragraphs, the salience of DI in each of these types of documents is described at a general level. The second part of this report will go into the actual positions of governments regarding DI.

2.1 Government Programmes

We start our analysis with the Belgian government programmes from 2002 to 2016 (four programmes in total). In general, the salience of DI in these programmes is rather low (see Figure 1). The 2003 government programme (put forward by Verhofstadt II) included some references to enhanced cooperation and some more general references to the EU, including the European government and the European constitution (see Figures 2 and 3). The 2008 government programme was very nationally focussed, containing no references to DI and very few references to the EU in general. The 2011 government headed by Di Rupo to some extent marks a difference. In this programme, there are several references to DI, including regarding the Financial Transaction Tax and the European Stability Mechanism. More generally, we also find some references to the EU constitution in this programme. Just before the formation of the government programme, the EU had warned Belgium to bring down its budget deficit and to restructure its government finances, possibly influencing the salience of the EU in the final programme. The 2014 programme was again rather nationally centred, containing no references to DI and limited references to the EU in general.

Figure 1 - Salience of DI in government programmes (relative word frequencies)



Translations of search terms (left to right): Financial Transaction Tax, Enhanced Cooperation, Charter of Fundamental Rights, European Stability Mechanism, Eastern Partnership.

We also conducted a qualitative analysis of the government programmes in the form of a holistic grading of the salience of DI. Our holistic grading confirmed that across all the programmes DI is a very low salience issue (only some indirect references). The analysis can, however, help us to contextualise our findings. In the 2003 programme, we find a discussion on the need for a "federal, unified Europe," with references to enhanced cooperation on cultural, military, social and diplomatic matters and EU enlargement. Here, Verhofstadt stresses the necessity of creating a homogeneously integrated Europe, with possibilities for further cooperation. This commitment to a more unified and coherent EU is also stated in the 2008 programme. Here, EU enlargement is explicitly stated as a desirable future, yet not a possible excuse for differentiated integration. The 2011 programme stresses the pivotal role of Belgium in European integration, which is not only a valuable legacy but an honourable duty to be continued. Again, we find a favourable position on various forms of enhanced cooperation, especially to address the consequences of the economic crisis. Last, in the 2014 programme we find a commitment to enhanced cooperation with the "eastern and southern parts of the Union" and again a commitment to a unified and integrated Union is made (although less than previous governments). DI is briefly mentioned as necessary for the wellbeing of the union, but the programme predominately focusses on EU integration as a whole. Therefore, all in all, DI is a low salience issue because Belgian governments particularly stress unified integration in their programmes.

2.2 Speeches by PMs

The second step in our analysis of the salience of DI in Belgium government rhetoric instead focusses on various types of speeches delivered by the Belgian Prime Minister. These include first speeches after the installation of governments, the Future of Europe speech delivered to the European parliament and speeches delivered after European Council meetings.

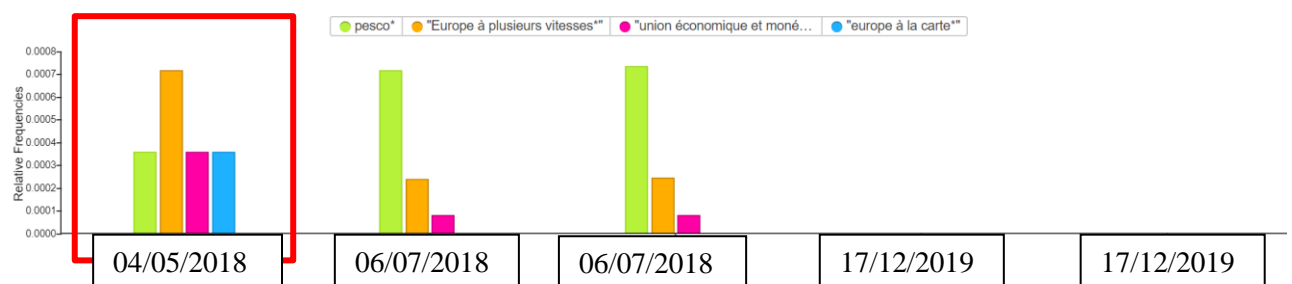
With respect to the first category, the first speeches of prime ministers, no references to key DI words were found. To contextualise the speeches, we also sought references to the EU more generally (see Appendix 3). In these speeches, prime ministers commonly referred to the European government, especially in the first half of the research period. In 2008, we also see a peak in references to the EU in relation to the economy and to the European crisis. In other first speeches, the EU is a low salience issue, although there are some references to a social EU and EU politics.

Again, we complemented our computer-assisted word count with a holistic grading of DI salience in first speeches. This qualitative analysis confirmed that DI salience is very low as there are practically no direct references to DI. In 2008, the eurozone is, however, mentioned as a blessing against the consequences of the economic crisis. In 2009, there is a reference to the EU 2020 strategy and to the European Stability Pact.

Next, we analyse the Future of Europe speech that was delivered by Charles Michel to the European Parliament in May 2018 (see Figure 2). This speech, which logically contained many references to the EU in general, also included some references to DI. A particular DI instance was frequently mentioned: the Pesco agreement. In addition, we also found some references to a multiple-speed EU, although limited. To contextualise, we also analysed two CE parliamentary discussions (speeches and debates) in which the ‘future of Europe’ appeared as one of the main issues and found that a two-speed Europe was mentioned, as were economic and monetary union and a Europe à la carte. That said, these references are very limited and therefore these results should be interpreted with caution.

Our holistic grading found that the salience of DI was rather high in the FOE speech, especially when compared to the other documents. What is interesting here is that the need for unity in the EU is stressed, while at the same time DI is advocated. The possibility of a multiple-speed EU is advocated, not to divide but to boost decision-making. The eurozone and the Schengen area are referred to as positive examples of a Europe at multiple speeds. At the same time, Michel argues that a multiple-speed Europe is not the same as a Europe à la carte.¹

Figure 2 - The salience of DI in the Future of Europe speech (in red) and related debates (relative word frequencies)

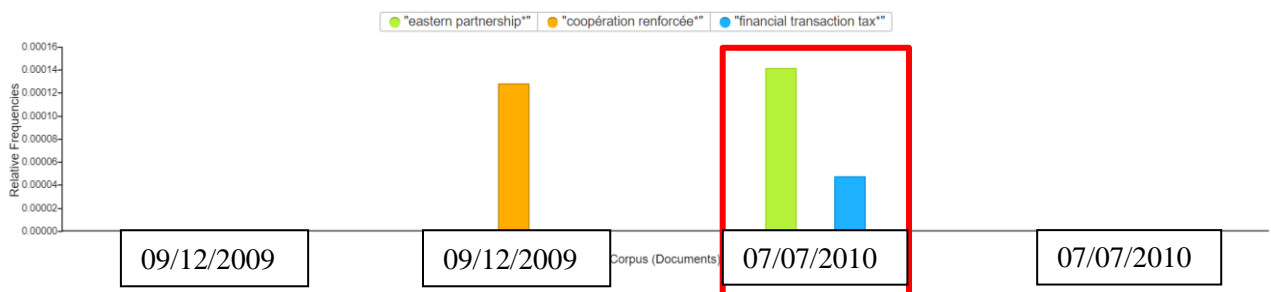


Translation of search terms (left to right): Pesco, multi-speed Europe, Economic and Monetary Union, Europe à la carte.

¹ “Nous devons éviter les non-dits, éviter les tabous. Une meilleure compréhension entre nous est indispensable pour forger les décisions avec une assise large. Nous devons avancer à vingt-sept parce que notre unité est notre force, mais pas l’unité au prix de l’immobilisme parce que l’immobilisme, c’est la garantie de reculer, de régresser. J’ai été parmi les premiers à plaider pour une Europe à plusieurs vitesses, pas pour diviser, mais au contraire pour mettre un turbo dans nos décisions. Les avancées majeures ont souvent été le fruit d’une avant-garde: la zone euro, l’espace Schengen. L’Europe à plusieurs vitesses, ce n’est pas l’Europe à la carte.”

Last, in the category of Prime Minister speeches, we also searched for references to DI in the speeches delivered by the Belgian PM when Belgium held the presidency of the Council of the European Union. Here, only the speech at the EU council by Yves Leterme (PM of Belgium in 2010) was found.² No address to the national community was found. In order to compensate for the lack of sources, a parliamentary statement and debate on the programme of the Belgian presidency were added (all are visualised in Figure 3). As in the previous graphs, we find that references to DI are very limited. In the programme of the Belgian presidency (presented in 2008), enhanced cooperation is mentioned various times. Moreover, in the speech by Leterme, we also found some references to instances to DI, including regarding the Financial Transaction Tax and the Eastern Partnership. When we look at references to the EU more generally (Appendix 4), we see that the speech delivered by Leterme focused very much on the European crisis (which is quite logical given that the EU was faced with a great recession and a sovereign debt crisis at the time). There were also some references to a further enlargement of the EU in this speech.

Figure 3 - Saliency of DI in EC presidency speeches, programmes and debates (relative word frequencies)



Translation of search terms (left to right): Eastern Partnership, Enhanced Cooperation, Financial Transaction Tax.

Our holistic grading of the single speech by Leterme during the Belgian presidency confirms that there are only some indirect references to DI. Instead, the speech focused on the financial crisis by stressing stricter governance of budgetary regimes and advocating one diplomatic voice and more Europe.

2.3 European Council Statements

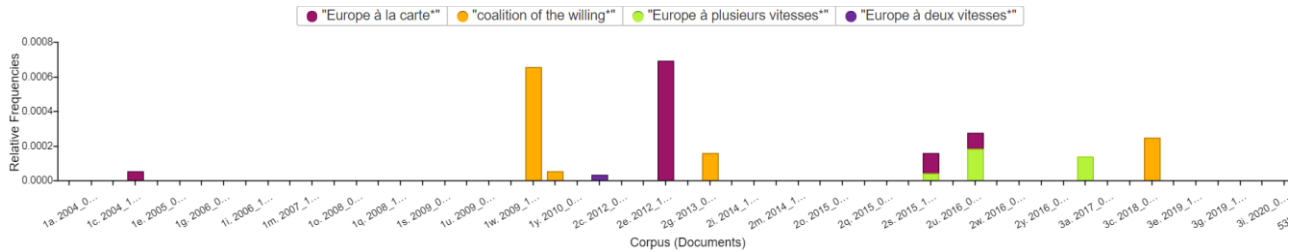
In the third step of our saliency analysis, we instead focus on the statements made by the Prime Minister in parliament before or after each European Council meeting. We found 29 statements between 2004 and 2020 in total. Once again, the saliency of DI was relatively low and no particular key word stood out. For the sake of simplicity, we grouped various DI key words by type of key word (models, mechanisms, instances) when reporting references in Figure 4 and Appendices 5a-5d. Figure 4 shows the saliency of DI models and demonstrates that there were some general references to a coalition of the willing (in particular in 2009, 2013 and 2018) and some references to a Europe à la carte (in particular in 2012).

Next, we probed into the saliency of the various DI mechanisms and instances (Appendix 5a-5d). Regarding instances of enhanced cooperation (Pesco, Financial Transaction Tax, the European Public Prosecutor and Rome III), we see a peak in the saliency of Pesco in 2017 and 2018 while references to enhanced cooperation are spread out across the period. In 2010 and 2013, there were some references to the Financial Transaction Tax. Regarding external agreements, we find the most references (though still limited) to the Eastern Partnership (in 2009 and 2015) and there were also some references to

² The speech by the PM was given in Dutch, French, German and English; the debate was not translated but on the contrary the original languages of the EU MP were kept. To tackle this problem, an English version of the document was added to the analysis. English terms were used in the analysis too and analysed by default.

Euromed. Finally, regarding references to opt-out policy fields, the customs union and the economic area were sparsely mentioned.

Figure 4 - Salience of conceptual keywords (DI models) in EC statements (relative word frequencies)



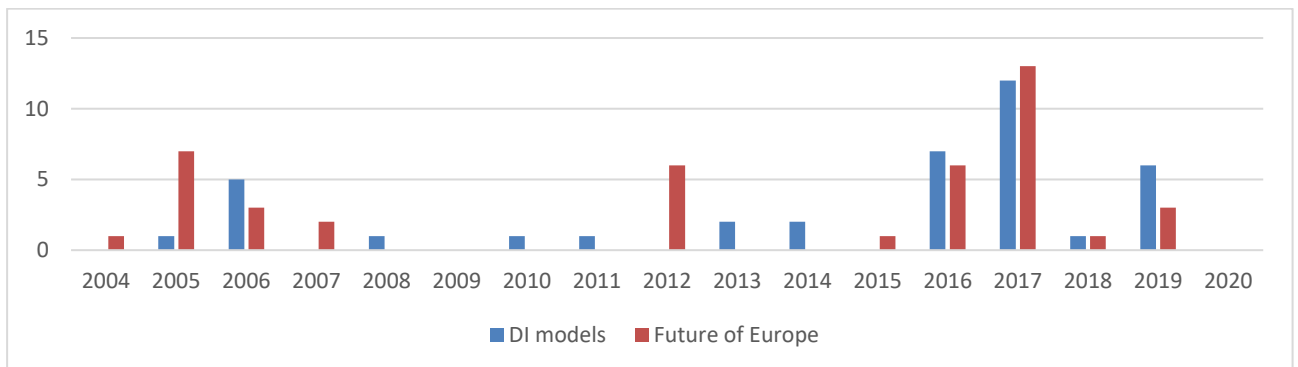
Translation of search terms (left to right): Europe à la carte, coalition of the willing, multi-speed Europe, two-speed Europe.

2.4 Parliamentary Debates

In the last and most extensive step of our salience analysis, we study references to DI in parliamentary debates between 2004 and 2020. We divide our discussion in three parts: references to DI models, DI mechanisms and DI instances.

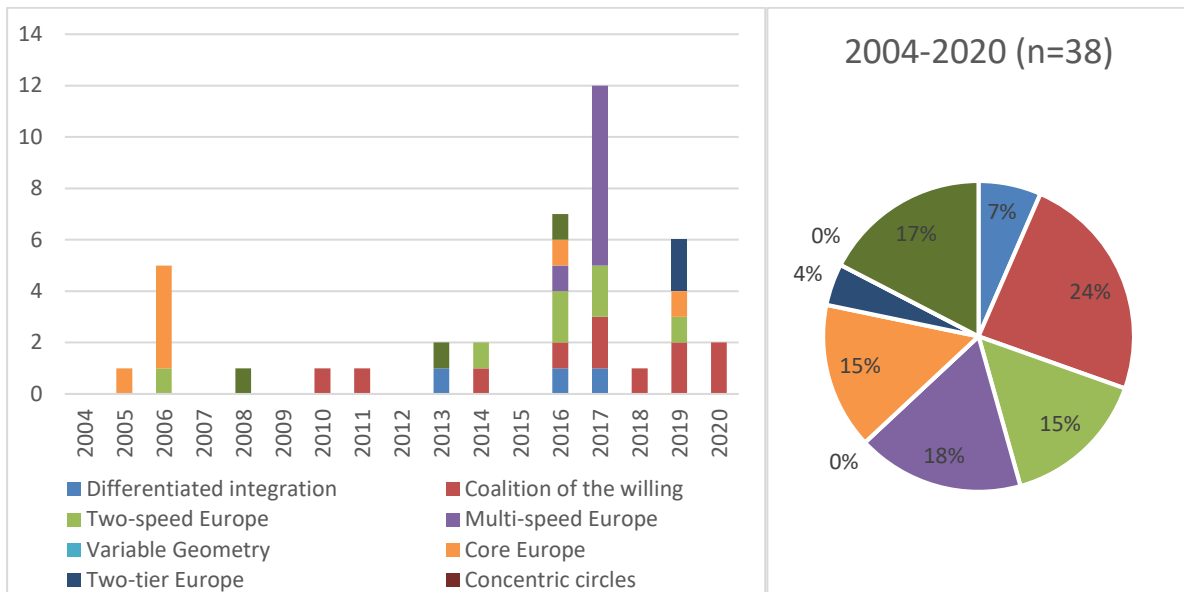
Figure 5 graphs the number of references to general DI models in Belgian parliamentary debates, together with references to the future of the EU more generally. As can be seen from the figure, there appears to have been more debate on DI and on the future of Europe in recent years, with a clear peak in 2017. This aligns with the rise of the New Flemish Alliance in Belgium, which has shifted the political agenda more to EU affairs. We also see a small peak in DI references in 2006, which was the year in which the Belgian parliament debated and agreed on the European constitution.

Figure 5 - Salience of DI models and the future of Europe in parliamentary debates (2004-2020)



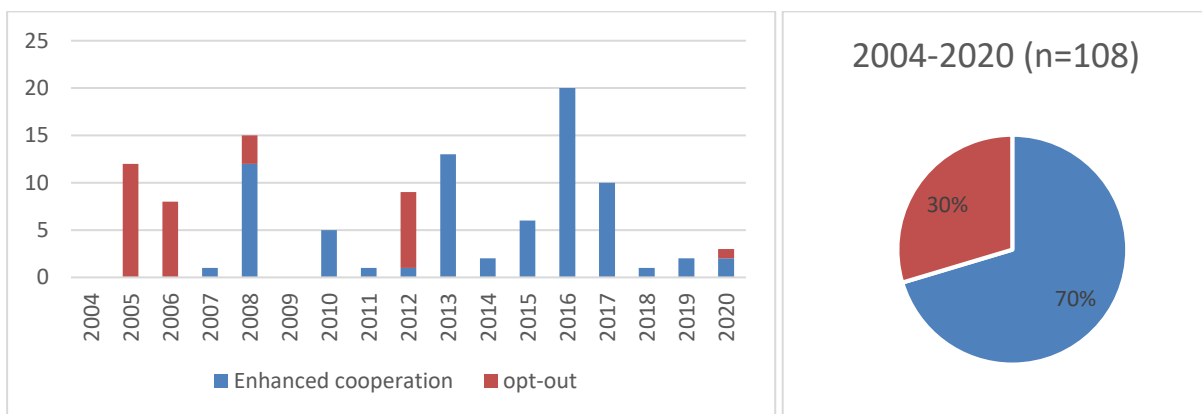
When we break down the frequency of DI model references by key word (Figure 6), we see that over the whole period a quarter of the references were to a coalition of the willing and a little less than a quarter to a Europe à la carte. Core Europe and a multiple-speed Europe are also popular models in the Belgian debate. In the peak of DI model salience, the parliament most commonly referred to a multiple-speed Europe (also including a two-speed Europe). This is particularly interesting given that earlier references to DI focus much more on core Europe (e.g. 80% in 2006).

Figure 6 - Salience of conceptual key words in parliamentary debates – breakdown by key word



Next, we move to references to DI mechanisms such as opt-outs and enhanced cooperation in Belgian parliamentary debates between 2004 and 2020 (Figure 7). We see a peak in 2016, where all the references referred to enhanced cooperation (20 in total). Nonetheless, there are also some references to DI mechanisms in other years, in particular in 2013, 2008 and 2005. When we break down the number of references by type of DI mechanism, we see that the majority of them refer to enhanced cooperation rather than opt-outs. References to opt-outs were found particularly in the early years (2005-2008, and some in 2012). More recently, the Belgian parliament has been increasingly focused on enhanced cooperation.

Figure 7 - Salience of DI mechanisms in parliamentary debates (2004-2020)

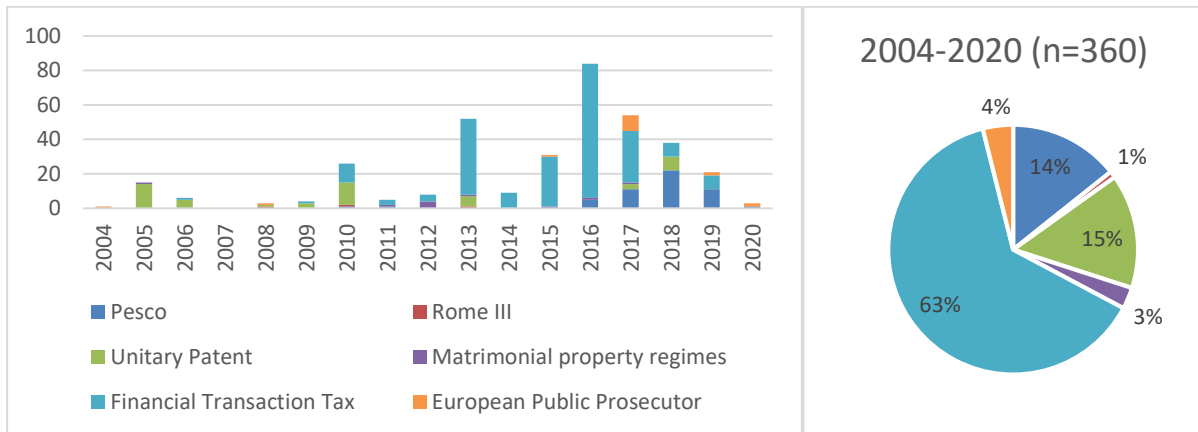


Finally, the analysis moves from the level of DI mechanisms to the level of DI instances. Here, we distinguish between instances of enhanced cooperation on the one hand and instances of opt-outs on the other. In addition, we also discuss instances of inter se agreements and external integration.

Starting with instances of enhanced cooperation (Figure 8), we found 360 references in total between 2004 and 2020. When looking at the trends in these references, we see a considerable increase in references to these types of enhanced cooperation since 2013, with a large peak in 2016. Between 2013

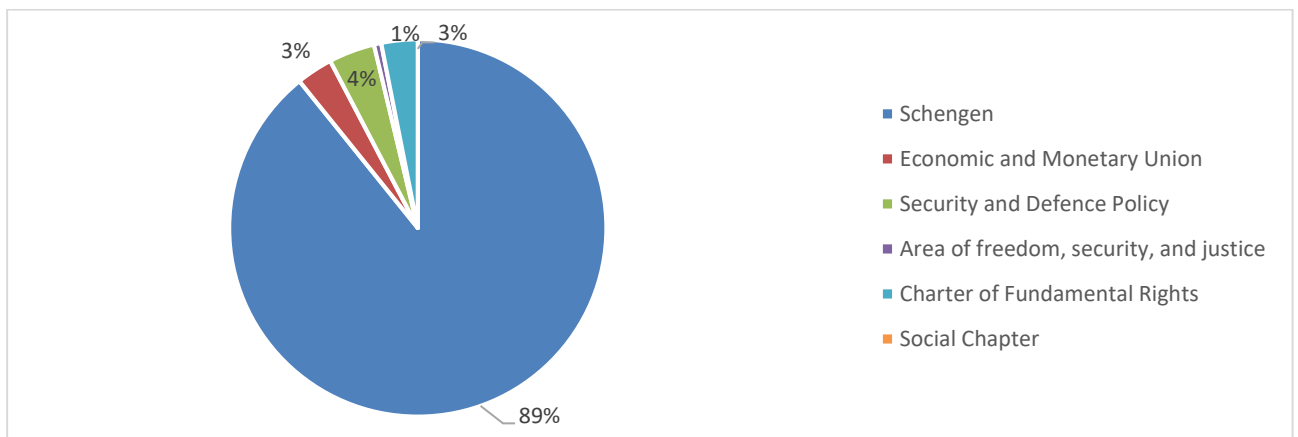
and 2017, the great majority of the references are linked to the Financial Transaction Tax. After the Belgian government had expressed interest in the tax in 2004, it was heavily debated in parliament. In 2016, the Belgians were perceived to have ‘cold feet’ as there was disagreement among the ruling parties as to the desirability and consequences of the ‘Tobin tax.’ It was particularly the Flemish nationalist N-VA that was opposed to the tax, while it had been a long-standing aim of Belgium’s mainstream parties. An increasing number of references are found for the Pesco agreement in more recent years.

Figure 8 - Breakdown of enhanced co-operation into instances of DI (2004-2020)



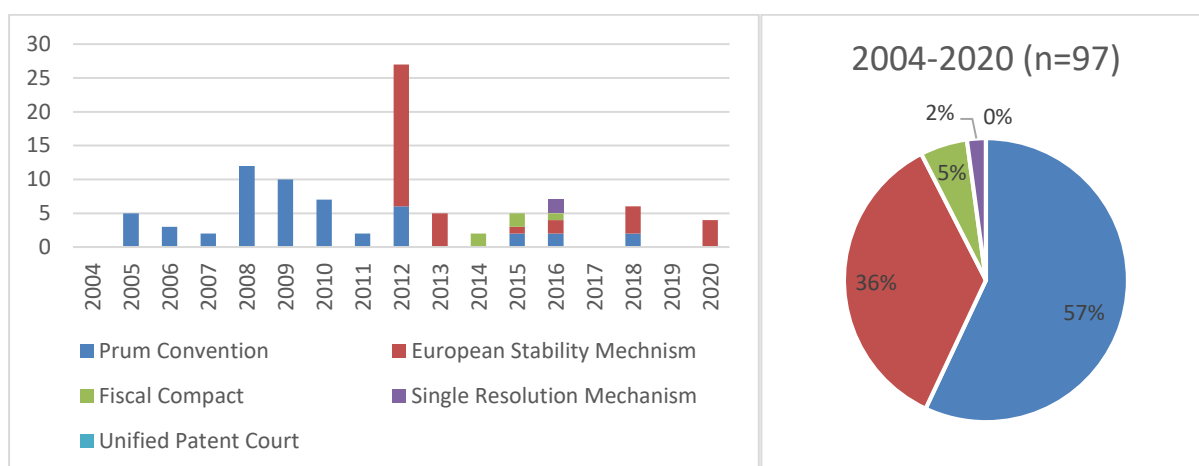
When we look instead at instances of opt-outs, we find 963 references between 2004 and 2020. Figure 9 demonstrates that almost all the references (89%) to opt-outs are accounted for by Schengen. Alternatively, some references to the Security and Defence Policy, Economic and Monetary Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights were also found, but much fewer compared to Schengen.

Figure 9 - Breakdown of opt-outs into instances of DI (n=963)



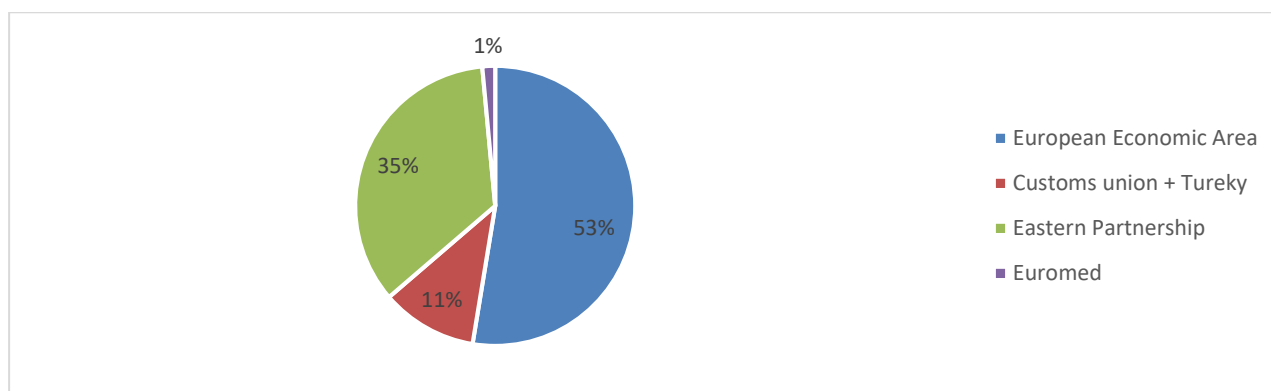
In our analysis, we also included references to inter se agreements as a type of DI instance (Figure 10). We did not find many references for this category between 2004 and 2020 (97 in total). When studying the distribution over time, we see a peak in 2012, and more references in general in the first half of the research period. The majority of the discussion in the Belgian parliament was on the Prüm convention, which was ratified in Belgium in early 2007. The peak in references is, however, driven by various debates on the European Stability Mechanism in 2012 at the height of the sovereign debt crisis.

Figure 10 - Breakdown of inter se agreements into instances of DI



Last, we also take a brief look at instances of external differentiation, including the European Economic Area, the Customs Union, the Eastern Partnership and Euromed. In total, we found 135 references for these specific instances between 2004 and 2020. As is visualised in Figure 11, approximately half of these references are linked to the European Economic Area (53%), although the Belgian parliament also debated on the Eastern Partnership and the Customs Union.

Figure 11 - Breakdown of instances of external DI (n=135)



In sum, DI appears to be a low salience issue in Belgian political debates. At the height of the sovereign debt crisis there were some discussions on the Financial Transaction Tax and the European Stability Mechanism, but overall the salience remains low.

3. What positions do Belgian governments have on DI?

In the second part of the analysis, we move away from the salience of DI in Belgian politics. Instead we focus on the positions of political parties (government and opposition) on DI. Here, we only look at the parliamentary (committee) debates as a source of data. For our selection of statements, we narrowed down our research period and only looked at debates in 2008, 2012 and 2017-2020 and we only focus on DI models and DI mechanisms (leaving out specific DI instances). Another criterion for our selection of data is that statements had to contain one of the six most frequently mentioned key words. From the salience analysis, we found that these key words were: two-speed or multi-speed Europe, coalition of the willing, two-tier Europe, EU à la carte, a Europe of regions and core Europe. In addition, we selected

statements on enhanced cooperation and opt-outs. Our analysis of the position of Belgian governments on DI is constructed in two parts. The first part provides an overview of positive, neutral and negative government positions on DI based on a quantitative analysis conducted using QDA data miner. The second section reconstructs various government positions based on a qualitative analysis of selected statements.

3.1 Quantitative overview of government positions

Regarding DI models, a quantitative analysis of parliamentary (committee) debates demonstrates that the assessment of a two-speed Europe and a coalition of the willing is more commonly positive than negative. It should, however, be mentioned that only 11 statements are included in the table below (which is caused by the low salience of DI in general in Belgian parliamentary debates). Moreover, we only found references in recent years (2017-2020). We do not see clear differences between opposition and government parties. In fact, from a close reading the statements, it seems that party members at different ends of the ideological spectrum (i.e. N-VA and MR) hold similar views on DI models.

Figure 12 – Position on Multi-speed Europe (two-speed and coalition of the willing)

| (n = 11) | Negative | Neutral | Positive |
|------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Government (n=6) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Opposition (n=5) | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 2008 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017-2020 | 2 | 4 | 5 |

When looking at the second group of DI models, we only found six statements in the period under consideration. Again, we do not see clear differences between opposition and government parties in the Belgian parliament. The general position regarding these models seems to be more often negative than positive, but it is hard to conclude with such a low number of statements.

Figure 13 - Position on Multi-end Europe (two-tier + a la carte + Europe of regions + core Europe)

| (n = 6) | Negative | Neutral | Positive |
|------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Government (n=3) | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Opposition (n=3) | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2008 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017-2020 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

Moving to DI mechanisms, we found 21 statements on enhanced cooperation in Belgian parliamentary debates. The majority of those referring to enhanced cooperation take a rather neutral stance, both when expressed by government and by opposition parties. We do find rather more negative statements on enhanced cooperation among opposition parties, but again this should be interpreted with caution given the limited number of references in total.

Last, we also searched for specific statements on opt-outs, and retrieved four from the parliamentary debates in the period under study. Three of these statements were made by representatives of government parties, whose positions were either neutral or positive. The one statement regarding opt-outs made by a representative of an opposition party was negative.

Figure 14 - Position on Enhanced co-operation

| (n = 21) | Negative | Neutral | Positive |
|---------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Government (n = 9) | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Opposition (n = 12) | 0 | 8 | 4 |
| 2008 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 2017-2020 | 1 | 8 | 6 |

Figure 15 - Position on "Opt-outs"

| (n = 4) | Negative | Neutral | Positive |
|--------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Government (n = 3) | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Opposition (n = 1) | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2008 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2012 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 2017-2020 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Taken together, it appears that Belgian opposition and government parties do not differ substantially in terms of their positions on DI. Here it should be noted that given the low salience of DI in parliamentary debates, our quantitative analysis of party positions is built on a limited number of statements. Moreover, questions and answers on DI were often rather vague, making it difficult to distil a position from them. In general, both the government and the opposition seem to be against a multi-end Europe but in favour of a multi-speed Europe. Enhanced co-operation on various issues is seen as positive, whereas opt-outs are seen as preventing smooth collaboration.

3.2 Qualitative assessment of government positions

In the second part of our analysis of government positions on DI, we present and analyse a series of statements on DI. These statements are presented in chronological order, and we focus specifically on the years 2008, 2012, and 2017-2020. The purpose of this second part is to get a better understanding of the party positions and framing of DI in Belgian parliamentary debates. That said, the occurrence of our DI key words in Belgium parliamentary debates remains limited, thus restricting our analysis.

3.2.1 2008 – Political instability

We start with the year 2008, when one of the biggest political crises in Belgian political history took place. After the general election on 10 June 2007, Belgium went through the longest period of negotiations recorded (194 days in total). During this period, Belgium did not have a government while the former government party (the Flemish Liberal Party) continued to deal with ‘current affairs’ after it had lost the election. Hence, there was a long period of political instability, possibly explaining the low presence of DI references.

However, there were three occurrences which could be linked to DI. The first one dealt with matrimonial regimes, where both opposition and government parties expressed positive stances on the need to harmonise or at least adopt targeted agreements to ensure the matrimonial rights of ‘international couples.’

“This question deals with a topic that concerns a lot of people. I do not think only about Belgians married to a foreigner. We know that in the case of divorce, it is always difficult to know what is the law that needs to be applied, even if the legislation provides certain criteria. Some Europeans

are also affected. That is a lot of people! A meeting of the Council of Ministers of Justice of the European Union that took place on July 25th drew my attention. On this occasion, eight European countries asked the Commission, on the basis of a formal procedure, to present a proposition as a part of what we could call an **enhanced cooperation** in order to determine some common rules concerning the applicable law in the case of separation of a transnational couple” (Jean-Luc Crucke (MR), 05.11.2008, afternoon, Commission de la Justice, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).³

“During July 25th 2008 Council Belgium stated that it will not associate itself [with the proposition] since eight countries were already present and that that was sufficient to start an **enhanced cooperation**. However, it will closely follow the file [...] Summarising, like you, I am **inclined to consider this move positive**. Who could not rejoice about the harmonisation of the execution of decisions concerning divorces? However, this process needs to happen coherently, correctly and in agreement with all countries. The advantage is that this initiative took place through the specific procedure of the enhanced cooperation of eight countries. We need to observe what proposition will be submitted, how we will be able to develop it, and evaluate at that point if enough countries can enter the system, so that Belgium can make the choice of adhering to it as well.” (Vice Prime-Minister and Minister of Justice, Melchior Wathelet (cdH), 05.1.2008, afternoon, Commission de la Justice, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).⁴

Second, the opt-out options given to the UK were discussed in parliament within the scope of temporary employment contracts. The Minister of Employment and Equal opportunities expressed a rather negative position on the issue:

“We were **firmly opposed** to it. Moreover, Britain desires the regulation to only apply to people who have already worked for four months. We cannot adhere to this restriction. Our hope for a good regulation lies in the hands of our colleagues at the European level.” (Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet (CDH), 17.6.2008, Commission des affaires sociales, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).⁵

The third occurrence of DI references is linked to the Lisbon treaty, where again a rather negative stance on DI was presented. The Lisbon Treaty was conceived as a standard way to collectively move forward and to enhance Europeanisation. Notably, a representative of an opposition party, Jan Jambon from the N-VA, formulated a negative position on DI in which he strongly preferred military coordination of 27 MSs rather than only 6 EU MSs on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty. In response, the Minister of Defence strongly agreed and expressed a willingness to defend unitary integration:

“Activities that tend towards the creation of a common defence market are dealt with in direct coordination among the 27 Member States, the European Agency of Defence and the European Commission. **Any initiative deliberately narrowing the defence market to six Member States**

³ Cette question a trait à une thématique qui concerne beaucoup de gens. Je ne pense pas ici seulement aux Belges qui sont mariés avec un étranger. On sait qu'en cas de divorce, il est toujours difficile de savoir quelle est la loi à appliquer, même si la législation prévoit certains critères. Des Européens sont également concernés, soit pas mal de monde! Mon attention a été attirée par une réunion du conseil des ministres de la Justice de l'Union européenne qui s'est tenue le 25 juillet dernier. À cette occasion, huit pays européens ont demandé à la Commission, sur base d'une procédure formelle de présenter une proposition dans le cadre de ce que l'on pourrait appeler une coopération renforcée, afin de déterminer des règles communes pour la loi applicable en cas de séparation d'un couple transfrontalier.

⁴ La Belgique a fait savoir lors du Conseil du 25 juillet 2008 qu'elle ne s'y associerait pas étant donné que 8 pays étaient déjà présents et que c'était suffisant pour lancer la coopération renforcée, mais qu'elle suivrait le dossier de près [...] En résumé, comme vous, je ne peux qu'être enclin à considérer une telle avancée comme positive. Qui pourrait ne pas se réjouir d'une harmonisation de l'exécution des décisions en matière de divorce. Mais il faut que cela se passe d'une façon cohérente, correcte et en accord avec l'ensemble des pays. L'avantage, c'est qu'en l'occurrence il y a eu cette initiative dans une procédure tout à fait spécifique de la coopération renforcée des huit États. Il faudra voir quelle sera la proposition qui sera déposée, comment on pourra la faire évoluer, et évaluer à ce moment-là si suffisamment de pays peuvent entrer dans le système pour que la Belgique fasse le choix d'y adhérer également.

⁵ “Nous y étions fermement opposés. De plus, les Britanniques souhaitaient que la réglementation ne s'applique qu'aux personnes ayant déjà travaillé pendant quatre mois. Nous ne pouvions pas adhérer à cette restriction. Notre espoir d'une bonne réglementation repose entre les mains de nos collègues au niveau européen.”

can obviously go against the objectives of a common European policy. I am willing to attentively watch respect for European rules.” (Minister of Defence, Pieter de Crem (CD&V), 05.03.2008, Commission de la Défense Nationale, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).⁶

All in all, the presence of DI in Belgian parliamentary debates in 2008 was low. However, when it was discussed, both opposition and government parties took a negative position on DI and expressed a preference for unitary integration in the EU.

3.2.2 2012 – Security and Defence policy

A second key moment in Belgian politics with respect to DI was in debates on enhanced cooperation on Security and Defence with a number of MS. In February 2012, the Dutch and Belgian Ministers of Defence discussed the possibilities for closer collaboration between the armed forces of the Netherlands and Belgium. These explorations were driven by budget cuts to the defence apparatus of both countries and were discussed in parliament. Here, Pieter de Crem from the CDo&V (a government party) stressed the cruciality of “pooling and sharing” in European defence and security.

“The Benelux countries are the only ones for now that are able to present concrete results concerning **pooling and sharing, which is inseparable from European security and defence policy.** Since Denmark is currently presiding over the European Union, it might be wise to invite some Danish colleagues or ambassadors to tell us what are the evolutions that they are still envisioning on this topic for the following three months.” (Minister of Defence, Pieter de Crem, (CD&V), 07.03.2012, Commission de la Défense Nationale, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).⁷

This view seems to be supported by other government parties as well as opposition parties. Several enhanced co-operations around the topic of European security and defence are praised and/or advanced by ministers. However, they are not discussed in depth; mere participation or a favourable stance are mentioned.

3.2.3 2017-2020 (FTT)

The last phase of our research period constitutes a turbulent political period. Various government coalitions were formed during this time, although the first minister was consistently from the French-speaking liberal party (MR). After Charles Michel left the federal parliament to join the European Council, another member of the party took over. During the first coalition, liberals, Christian democrats and the far-right N-VA were together. After Charles Michel signed a migration deal, N-VA left the coalition, which was followed by a centre-right coalition. The Socialist Party (PS – one of the most popular French-speaking parties) and the Green party (a party presenting itself as linguistically united – although it can present itself for elections only to the respective linguistic communities) were in the opposition.

Between 2017 and 2020, DI was mentioned in relation to social dumping, asylum policy and the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT). Regarding the first, European monetary integration was discussed and DI was mentioned in the form of enhanced cooperation as a **legitimate and positive way** to prevent

⁶ “Les activités tendant à la création d’un marché commun de la défense sont menées en étroite coordination entre les 27 Etats membres, l’Agence européenne de Défense et la Commission européenne. Une initiative qui restreint délibérément le marché de la défense à six Etats membres peut évidemment aller à l’encontre des objectifs d’une politique européenne commune. Je suis disposé à veiller très attentivement au respect des règles européennes.”

⁷ Aucun problème. Les pays du Benelux sont en effet pour l’instant les seuls à pouvoir présenter des résultats concrets en matière de pooling and sharing qui est indissociable de la politique européenne de sécurité et de défense. Le Danemark assurant actuellement la présidence de l’Union européenne, il serait peut-être opportun d’inviter quelques collègues danois ou quelques ambassadeurs à nous dire quelles sont les évolutions qu’ils envisagent encore dans ce domaine au cours des trois prochains mois.

social dumping and other political goals (government party, led by MR [French-speaking liberals]). Thus, a positive stance on DI was articulated.

“Concerning the different points mentioned in your question, Belgium has always pleaded for a **deepening of monetary and economic union** and for a real policy of investment at the European level. During the Valetta summit, the Prime Minister also underlined the importance of blocking social dumping. We really plead for the advancement of the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive. Granted, there are still divergences within the 27 on these various points, since the discussion is done in the absence of Great Britain, even though the desire to go forward together was confirmed during the informal summit that took place at Valletta. **What we cannot do immediately in 27, we can do in a narrower circle, for instance in the eurozone basing ourselves on the tools that the Treaties recognise, such as enhanced cooperation.** We will indeed continue to work along this path in the preparation of what some already call the Rome Declaration, which should be in place at the end of March. I hope that this declaration will be able to contain a certain number of concrete points with an implementation plan.” (Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Didier Reynders, 15.02.2017, Commission des relations extérieures).⁸

Regarding asylum policy, according to the Belgian government asylum policies need to be harmonised among countries, which can only be done among all 27 MS to guarantee the whole Schengen and European projects. As such, DI is seen as negative and cumbersome when it comes to asylum practices as it creates structural differences among EU MSs. However, once again, it is a temporary means that allows action against possible immobilism.

“Throughout these last years, Belgium has been strongly engaged at all levels to implement a structural reform of the European asylum system and Belgium pleads for the adoption of the complete package, notably the seven legislative propositions. However, if this process is not possible before the election, Belgium, like the Netherlands, pleads for **the adoption of a mini-package concerning the reinstallation of Eurodac and the European Agency for Asylum.** Belgium has further stated that it is ready to support provisional solutions centred on the question of landings/arrivals.” (Minister of Social Issues and Public Health, and of Asylum and Migration, Maggie de Block, 20.03.2019, Commission de l’intérieur, des affaires générales et de la fonction publique).⁹

Regarding the FTT, enhanced cooperation was indirectly mentioned as the desired means to achieve it. This debate focused on both a social Europe and the FTT. Several members of the PS (centre-left, socialist party) mentioned FTT in relation to enhanced cooperation and the alleged efforts by the government to prevent its implementation. Without FTT a “social Europe would not be possible.”

“Do you think that Belgium actively participates in the implementation of this **other Europe**, when we see, for instance, that this government is blocking **enhanced cooperation on FTT**?” (Stephane Crusnière (PS), question to Juncker, 21.02.2017, Réunion commune du comité d’avis fédéral chargé

⁸ En ce qui concerne les différents points mentionnés dans votre question, la Belgique a toujours plaidé pour un approfondissement de l’Union économique et monétaire et pour une véritable politique d’investissements au niveau européen. Lors du sommet de La Valette, le premier ministre a aussi souligné l’importance de faire barrage au dumping social. Nous plaidons vraiment pour que l’on puisse avancer dans la révision de la directive sur le détachement des travailleurs. Certes, il reste des divergences au sein des 27 sur ces différents points puisque la discussion se fait en l’absence de la Grande-Bretagne dans ce cadre-là, même si la volonté commune d’avancer ensemble a été confirmée lors du sommet informel qui s’est tenu à La Valette. Ce que nous ne pouvons pas immédiatement faire à 27, nous pouvons le faire en nombre plus restreint au sein, par exemple, de la zone euro et en se basant sur les instruments que les traités prévoient, telle que la coopération renforcée. Nous allons vraiment continuer à travailler dans cette voie dans la préparation de ce qu’on appelle déjà la déclaration de Rome qui devrait intervenir à la fin du mois de mars. J’espère que cette déclaration pourra contenir un certain nombre de points concrets avec un plan de mise en œuvre.

⁹ “Tout au long de ces dernières années, la Belgique s’est fortement engagée à tous niveaux afin de permettre la réforme structurelle du système européen d’asile et la Belgique prône l’adoption du paquet complet, à savoir les sept propositions législatives. Toutefois, si cette démarche s’avère impossible avant les élections, la Belgique, à l’instar des Pays-Bas, plaide pour l’adoption d’un minipaquet en ce qui concerne la réinstallation Eurodac et l’Agence de l’Union européenne pour l’asile. La Belgique a également fait savoir qu’elle est prête à soutenir des solutions provisoires centrées sur la question des débarquements.”

des questions européennes et de la commission des relations extérieures, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).¹⁰

As such, enhanced cooperation was particularly advocated by Belgian opposition parties, with MPs from the PS regularly interrogating the government on the FTT because enhanced cooperation was seen as “primordial for this party” (Stephane Crusnière (PS), 18.04.2017, Commission des Finances et du Budget, Chambre des représentants de Belgique). This was the only instance of DI in which there was a divide in the parliament. The question of enhanced cooperation on taxation was also brought up by the Green party and MR, which asked for GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple) taxation at the European level. The response to this proposal was vague as the economic consequences for the EU MSs needed to be taken into account.

“In this time when the fiscal optimisation mechanisms used by big digital companies are more and more denounced, France is trying to **federate European countries around a common taxation initiative** of what we call GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) state by state on the basis of their sales figures. [...] These countries would be ready to sign a common letter claiming [...] a harmonisation tax on the sales figures of the digital giants. On this matter, the group of 27 states, including Belgium, which also suffer from this fiscal dumping **need to work as fast as possible**. Mr Premier, what do you think of the French initiative about GAFA taxation? Has Belgium been officially solicited on the matter? Are you ready to support the French initiative?” (Georges Gilkinet (Ecolo-Groen), 26.09.2017, Commission des finances et du budget).¹¹

“Mr Premier, what is Belgium’s position concerning taxation of GAFA, knowing Google’s presence in our territory, in a neighbourhood well-known to some? What is your response to the initiative of your French homologue? Pierre Moscovici, European Commissioner for Financial and Economic Affairs, wishes this file to go forward unanimously, [approved by] the twenty-seven countries of the European Union. Do you think that this unanimity is possible, or even desirable, to the extent that it could block the file? Does Belgium advocate for **enhanced cooperation** on this matter, **in the case that unanimity is not met?**” (Jean-Jacques Flahaux (MR), 26.09.2017, Commission des finances et du budget).¹²

In 2019, enhanced cooperation regarding FTT was again put on the agenda by the Green party, to which the government (Dutch- and French-speaking liberal parties and Dutch-speaking Christian democrats) replied negatively with respect to the possibility of enhanced cooperation. Unfair competition was likely to see the light if the measure was not taken unanimously, according to a member of the government. Therefore, Belgium invited all 27 MSs to work together on the FTT. However, the speaker did not know whether other MSs would be interested in joining the enhanced co-operation.

¹⁰ “Trouvez-vous que la Belgique participe activement à mettre en œuvre cette autre Europe, quand on voit par exemple que le gouvernement actuel bloque la coopération renforcée sur la TTF?”

¹¹ “A l’heure où ces mécanismes d’optimisation fiscale utilisés par les grandes entreprises du numérique sont de plus en plus décriés, la France tente de fédérer les États européens autour d’une initiative commune de taxation de ce qu’on appelle les GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) pays par pays, sur la base de leur chiffre d’affaires. Ces pays seraient prêts à signer une lettre commune réclamant une taxation appropriée pour l’économie numérique, et plus précisément une taxe d’harmonisation sur le chiffre d’affaires des géants du numérique. Celle-ci consisterait à taxer les grands groupes du numérique sur la base de leurs revenus. [...] Il s’agit, face à cette question fiscale, et même si des détails techniques doivent être réglés, que les vingt-sept États, dont la Belgique, également victime de ce dumping fiscal, puissent avancer le plus rapidement possible. Monsieur le ministre, que pensez-vous de l’initiative française en vue d’une taxation des GAFA? La Belgique a-t-elle été officiellement sollicitée sur le sujet? Qu’a-t-elle répondu? Êtes-vous prêt à soutenir l’initiative française?”

¹² “Monsieur le ministre, quelle est la position de la Belgique concernant la taxation des GAFA, sachant la présence de Google sur notre territoire, dans une commune bien connue de certains? Quelle est votre réponse à cette initiative de votre homologue français? Pierre Moscovici, commissaire européen chargé des Affaires économiques et financières, souhaite que ce dossier avance de façon unanime avec les vingt-sept membres de l’Union européenne. Pensez-vous que cette unanimité soit possible, voire souhaitable dans la mesure où cela peut être un moyen de bloquer un dossier? La Belgique prône-t-elle une coopération renforcée dans ce dossier, dans l’éventualité où une unanimité n’était pas trouvée?”

“In 2011, the European Commission proposed a harmonised tax on financial transactions for the whole EU. Negotiations around it failed every time. Last year, Germany and France then submitted a proposition together. What position did the federal government adopt with respect to this proposition during the ECOFIN meeting that took place on March 12th, during the informal meeting on June 14th and during the preparatory meetings in the working groups? Was the financial transactions tax (FTT) again discussed during the informal meetings on September 13th and 14th?” (Dieter Vanbesien (EcoloGroen), 22.10.2019, Commission des finances et du budget).¹³

“[...]The meeting that took place on the side-lines of the ECOFIN Council on June 14th focused primarily on the imposition or not on transactions carried out by pension funds and on the possible pooling of the revenue from the FTT. Belgium underlined that the exoneration of products linked to pension funds remains a major worry. Moreover, since the current proposition presents all the characteristics of a tax on stock-market transactions, **Belgium stated its preference for the extension of the measure to all the Member States in order to prevent any unfair competition in the EU.** [...]” (Vice Prime-Minister and Minister of Finance – Fight against Fiscal Fraud – Development Cooperation, Alexander de Croo (Open VLD), 22.10.2019, Commission des finances et du budget).¹⁴

3.2.4 Brexit

There was one particular event that sparked discussions on DI: the Brexit referendum and its consequences. The UK issue became a proxy for discussing the future of Europe as not a merely economic area but a social and political one. Specifically, the issue of the borders with the UK was debated, arguing **in favour of a DI mechanism** in order to prevent Nordic and eastern EU MSs tearing apart the Union. Enhanced cooperation was discussed as a positive and useful means to achieve desired political goals, for instance an enlarged economic and monetary union. DI, specifically a multi-speed Europe, came out as a solution from the impasse created by Brexit.

“to satisfy the promoters of both options, it is possible to put in place **a multi-speed Europe with a core** composed of the founding states, which are willing to put in place more integrated policies, and another one reuniting the late comers, or of **a eurozone progressing faster on integration policies.**” (Jean-Jacques Flahaux, MR, 26.09.2017, Commission des finances et du budget, Chambre des représentants de Belgique).¹⁵

Recent political events, notably Brexit, were also mentioned as a source of the need for enhanced cooperation in order to safeguard European values and the European project.

“We strongly need a harmonisation of several European regulations, of course on economic, fiscal and monetary matters but also on social and judicial matters [...] The 27 Member States have to resolutely go forward. Those which prefer to slow down the pace will have to take responsibility for this decision. We **unite the states that are willing to continue on the path of progress.** [...] Mister

¹³ En 2011, la Commission européenne a proposé une taxe harmonisée sur les transactions financières pour l'ensemble de l'UE. Les négociations y relatives ont à chaque fois échoué. L'année dernière, l'Allemagne et la France ont alors soumis ensemble une proposition commune. Quelle position le gouvernement fédéral a-t-il adoptée par rapport à cette proposition lors de la réunion ECOFIN du 12 mars, lors de la réunion informelle du 14 juin et lors des réunions préparatoires dans le groupe de travail? La taxe sur les transactions financières (TTF) a-t-elle à nouveau été abordée lors de la réunion informelle des 13 et 14 septembre?

¹⁴ [...]La réunion qui s'est déroulée en marge du Conseil ECOFIN du 14 juin s'est essentiellement concentrée sur l'imposition ou non des transactions effectuées par les fonds de pension et sur l'éventuelle mutualisation des recettes de la TTF. La Belgique a souligné que l'exonération des produits liés à des fonds de pension demeure une inquiétude majeure. De plus, dès lors que la proposition actuelle présente tous les traits d'une taxe sur les opérations boursières, la Belgique a exprimé sa préférence à l'égard de l'extension du champ d'application dans tous les États membres, afin d'éviter toute concurrence déloyale au sein de l'UE. [...]

¹⁵ “Pour satisfaire les tenants des deux options, la possibilité de mettre en place une Europe à deux vitesses avec un noyau dur composé des pays fondateurs, susceptible de mettre en place des politiques plus intégrées, et un autre groupe réunissant les derniers entrants, ou d'une zone euro avançant plus vite dans les politiques d'intégration.”

President, a **multi-speed Europe** is not my preference. However, we may have to go with it: a core Europe, consisting of the states of the eurozone. I plead for **enhanced co-operation** among these states on economic, security and migration questions. Let's not ignore a Defence Europe, or a Union of information." (President of the Senate, Christine Defraigne (MR), 07.03.2012, Commission de la Défense Nationale).¹⁶

Thus, while DI was not desirable *per se*, it was repeatedly mentioned as the means to solve European immobilism, following the examples of Benelux, NATO, Belgo-Dutch and Schengen collaboration. The government parties defined a multi-speed Europe as the future that needed to happen, a position echoed by ministers. If moving forward collectively with all 27 MSs was not a possibility, creating different collaborations will not be ignored on issues like migration and economic and monetary integration. The position was expressed by the Prime Minister himself:

"a **coalition of the willing [is desirable]** in order to take the EU project out of a certain form of immobilism, to pass from a passive Europe to a Europe that acts, to pass from a Europe of crises to one of projects. In this frame, you know that I am actively collaborating with other colleagues to try to develop another method that would allow the European Council to take on its role of booster, its role of political impetus." (Prime-Minister Charles Michel (MR), 08.11.2017, Commission de l'intérieur, des affaires générales, et de la fonction publique).¹⁷

In response, the PS (an opposition party) expressed agreement with this view, underlining the necessity of not only an active Europe but also a Europe that deals with fiscal fraud (implicitly hinting at the FTT). Last, in post-Brexit debates the question of security came back concerning the decision by the UK government to present several opt-outs concerning penal and police collaboration. The importance of European collaboration on the matter was underlined by an MP (N-VA).

"I think that the minister is **as convinced as me of the interest in cooperation**. Great Britain is a close country. European cooperation between the judicial authorities and police is necessary but in the case of this mutual aid each member state can always defend its nationals in a sovereign way, protecting them against criminal organisations. I hope that the minister will work to let Britain understand that **European cooperation will benefit everyone**." (Daphné Dumery (N-VA), 18.12.2012, Commission de la justice).¹⁸

In sum, on average there appeared to be broad consensus among the government and opposition parties on their positions towards DI. Both groups perceived DI as not a desirable end in itself, although it could be a viable means to move forward in the EU. The Financial Transaction Tax was the only exception with the opposition and government having divergent views on DI.

¹⁶ "Nous avons besoin comme de pain d'une harmonisation de quantité de règles européennes, bien sûr en matière économique, fiscale ou monétaire mais aussi en matière sociale et judiciaire. [...] Les 27 États membres doivent résolument aller de l'avant. Ceux qui préfèrent ralentir le tempo devront assumer la responsabilité de cette décision. Nous réunissons les pays désireux de poursuivre sur la voie du progrès. [...] Monsieur le président, l'Europe à plusieurs vitesses n'a pas ma préférence. Mais il nous faudra peut-être l'assumer: un noyau dur constitué par les États de la zone Euro. Je plaide pour des coopérations renforcées entre ces États sur les questions d'économie, de sécurité ou de migration. Ne faisons pas l'impasse d'une Europe de la défense, ni d'une union des renseignements."

¹⁷ "une coalition des bonnes volontés afin de sortir le projet de l'UE d'une certaine forme d'immobilisme, de passer d'une Europe qui subit à une Europe qui agit, de passer de l'Europe des crises à celle des projets. Dans ce cadre-là, vous savez que je suis actif, en collaboration avec d'autres collègues, pour tenter de développer une autre méthode qui permettrait au Conseil européen d'assumer davantage son rôle de booster, son rôle d'impulsion politique."

¹⁸ "Je pense que la ministre est tout autant convaincue que moi de l'intérêt d'une coopération. La Grande-Bretagne est un pays voisin. Une coopération européenne entre les autorités judiciaires et policières est nécessaire mais dans le cadre de cette entraide, chaque État membre peut toujours défendre souverainement ses ressortissants en les protégeant contre les organisations criminelles. J'espère que la ministre s'emploiera à faire comprendre aux Britanniques que la coopération européenne profite à tous."

Appendices

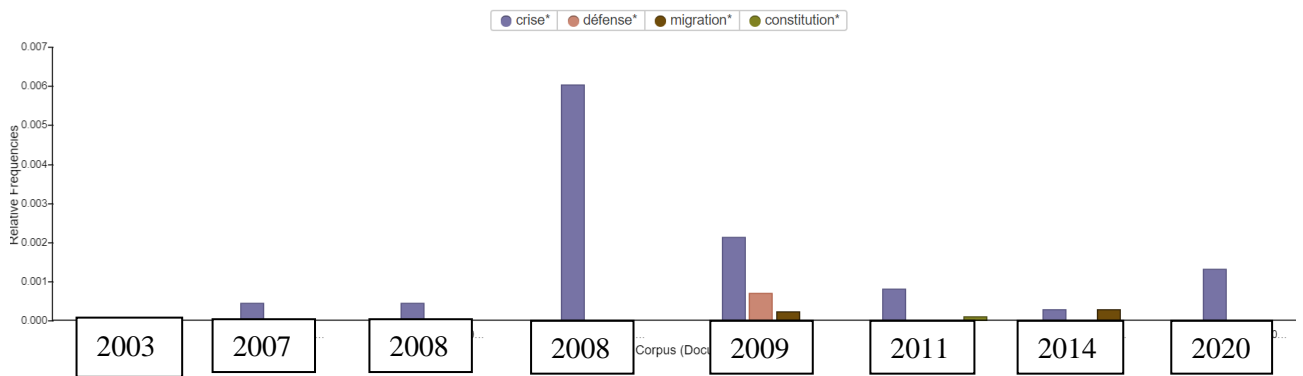
Appendix 1 Overview of the documents analysed

| | Category of document | Time period | Details |
|----------|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | Government programmes | 2004-2020 | 2003, 2008 (3 times, once with the same PM [2009] and once with a different one [2008bis], 2011, 2014 (3 times, once with the same PM [2018] and then with a new one [2020]). |
| 2 | First speeches and parliamentary debate | 2004-2020 | The first speech after elections by each PM in parliament and the subsequent debates. 2003, 2007 (interim), 2008, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2018, 2020. |
| 3 | European Council presidency speeches and parliamentary debates a. in the European Parliament b. in the Belgian Parliament (related debates) | 2004-2020 | 07-07-2010 [European Parliament] 09-12-2008 [Belgian Parliament] |
| 4 | Future of Europe speeches and parliamentary debates a. in the European Parliament b. in the Belgian Parliament | 2017-2020 | - PM speech in the European Parliament on the 'Future of Europe' on 04-05-2018 - Parliamentary debate on the 'Future of Europe' on 23/24-04-2018. |
| 5 | Prime Minister European Council statements | 2004-2020 | Pre- and post-Council statements in the Belgian Parliament: 2004 x4, 2005 x2, 2006 x3, 2007 x3, 2008 x4, 2009 x5, 2010 x3, 2011 x2, 2012 x3, 2013 x3, 2014 x3, 2015 x7, 2016 x7, 2017 x2, 2018 x2, 2019 x2, 2020 x2. |
| 6 | Parliamentary debates | 2008 2012 2017–2020 | All documents with one of the keywords. |
| 7 | Government EU policy reports and EU influence strategies | 2004-2020 | None |

Appendix 2 List of keywords and translations

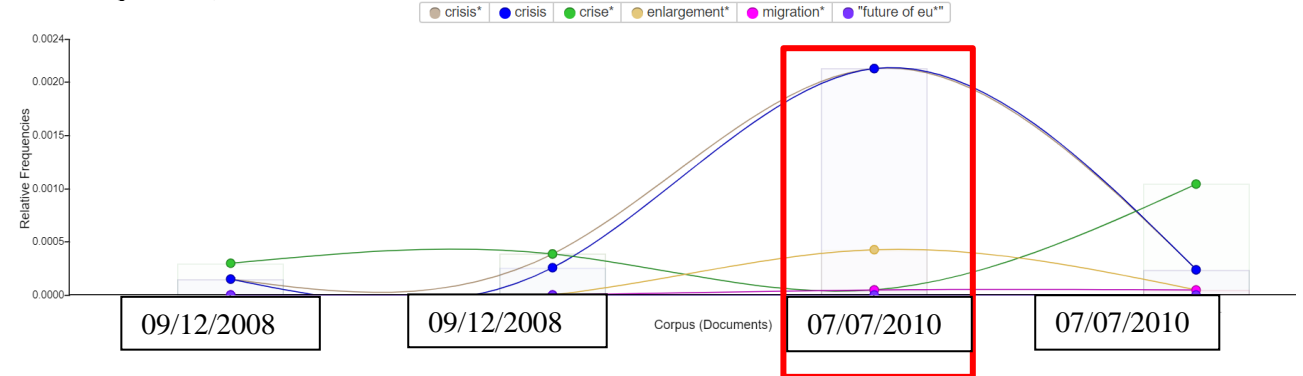
| Level of DI discourse | Keyword | Dutch/French Translation | Notes | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | Differentiated integration | Intégration différenciée | | |
| DI models | Coalition of the willing | Coalition of the willing | <i>Dutch texts often use the English text by default; French texts do so more rarely.</i> | |
| | Two-speed Europe | Europe à deux vitesses | | |
| | Multi-speed Europe | Europe à plusieurs vitesses | | |
| | Variable geometry | Géométrie variable, Europe à géométrie variable | | |
| | Core Europe | Kerneuropa, Kern-Europa, noyau dur, noyau dur européen, Europe des régions | <i>Much more present in Dutch texts than in French texts</i> | |
| | Two-tier Europe | Two-tier Europe | <i>No French translation was found for the term; Dutch texts use the English term.</i> | |
| | Concentric circles à la carte | Cercles concentriques à la carte, Europe à la carte, Europa à la carte | <i>Translations for Europa à la carte (NL) are sometimes translated as Europe à deux vitesses (FR)</i> | |
| | Future of Europe | Futur de l'europe, avenir de l'europe | | |
| DI mechanisms | Enhanced cooperation opt-out | Coopération renforcée opt-out, opt out, non-participation, non participation | <i>Also used in many other contexts Very difficult to find any reference for the term in French texts. Dutch texts use the English term translated into French through paraphrases.</i> | |
| DI instances | Instances of enhanced cooperation | Pesco | Pesco, cooperation structure permanente, CSP | <i>French and English terms are used interchangeably</i> |
| | | Rome III | Rome III | |
| | | Unitary patent | JUB, Jurisdiction unifiée du brevet, brevet communautaire, brevet européen | |
| | | Matrimonial property regimes | Biens matrimoniaux, regimes matrimoniaux, droit des regimes matrimoniaux, regimes matrimoniaux unifiés, regimes matrimoniaux UE | |
| | | Financial Transaction Tax | Taxe sur les transactions financières, TFF | |
| | | European Public Prosecutor | Parquet Européen, Bureau du Procureur General Européen, BPGE | |
| | Opt-out policy fields | Schengen | Schengen | <i>Often used in reference to visas and Maison Schengen in DRC</i> |
| | | Economic and Monetary Union | Union économique et monétaire | |
| | | Security and Defence Policy | Politique de sécurité et défense | |
| | | Area of Freedom, Security and Justice | Espace de liberté, sécurité et justice | |
| | | Charter of Fundamental Rights Social Charter | Charte des droits fondamentaux, Chapitre social, | |
| | Inter se | Prüm Convention | Traité de Prüm | |
| | | European Stability Mechanism | Mécanisme européen de stabilité | |
| | | Fiscal Compact | Fiscal compact, pacte budgétaire européen | |
| | | Single Resolution Mechanism | Mécanisme de resolution unique | |
| | External | Unified Patent Court | UPC | |
| | | European Economic Area | Espace économique européen | |
| Customs Union + Turkey | | Union douanière Turquie | | |
| Eastern Partnership | | Partenariat oriental | | |
| | Euromed | Euromed | | |

Appendix 3 Salience of EU-related issues in first speeches of Prime Ministers (no DI keyword was mentioned)



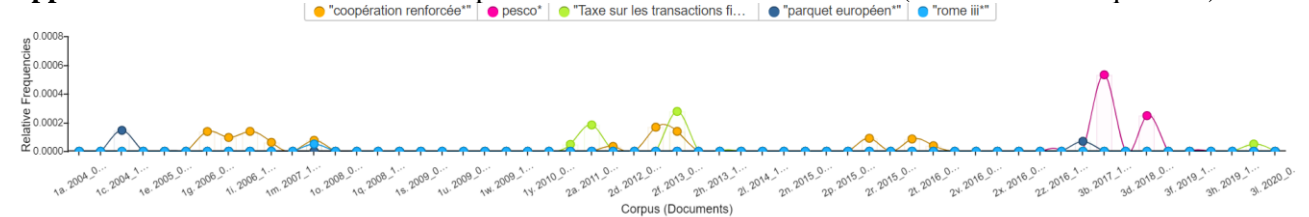
Translation of search terms (left to right): crisis, defence, migration, constitution.

Appendix 4 Salience of EU-related issues in EC presidency speeches, programmes and debates (relative word frequencies)



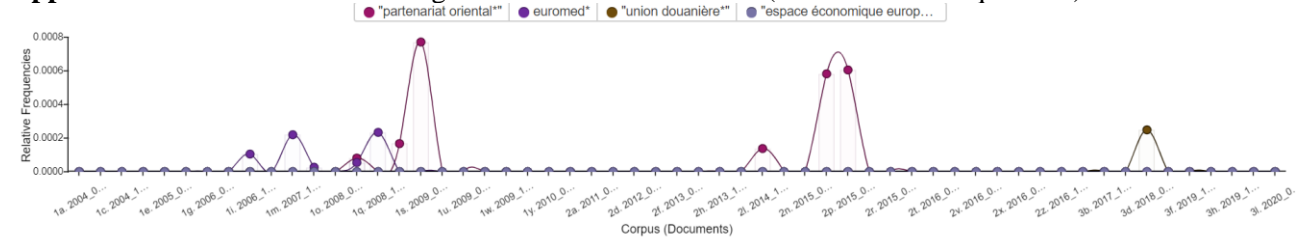
Translation of search terms (left to right): crisis, crisis, enlargement, migration, future of EU (partly English in the original).

Appendix 5a Salience of enhanced cooperation instances in EC statements (relative word frequencies)



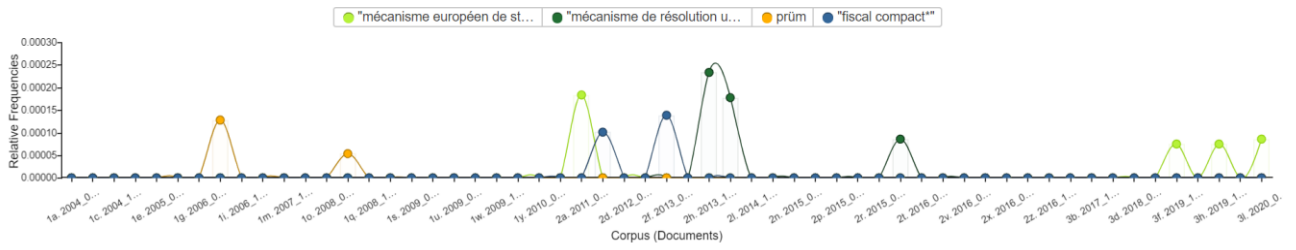
Translation of key terms (left to right): Enhanced Cooperation, Pesco, Financial Transactions Tax, European Prosecutor, Rome III.

Appendix 5b Salience of external agreements in EC statements (relative word frequencies)



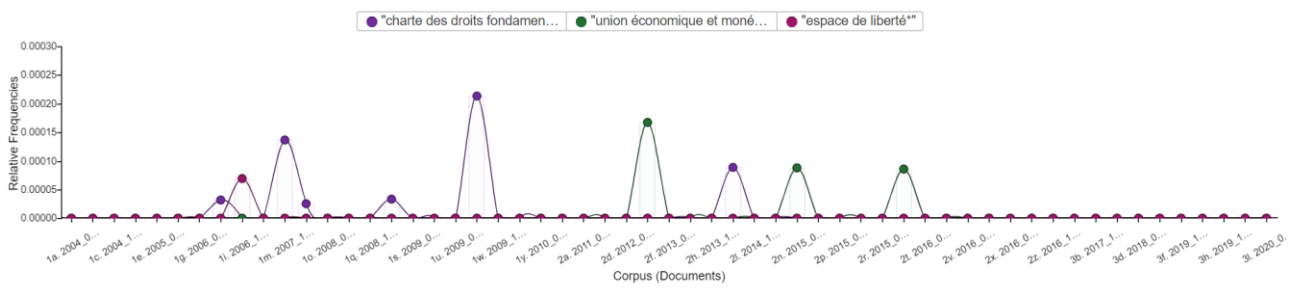
Translation of search terms (left to right): Eastern Partnership, Euromed, Customs Union, European Economic Area.

Figure 5c Salience of inter se agreements in EC statements (relative word frequencies)



Translation of key terms (left to right): European Stability Mechanism, Single Resolution Mechanism, Prüm, Fiscal Compact.

Figure 5d Salience of DI opt-out policy fields in EC statements (relative word frequencies)



Translation of search terms (left to right): Charter of Fundamental Rights, Economic and Monetary Union, Freedom Area.

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