



The Commission's Agenda: an analysis of changing policy attention of the European Commission from 1995 - 2012

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the changes in the agenda of the European Commission. Using a newly created coding scheme, inspired by the Policy Agendas Project combined with lists of Commission portfolios and Directorates-General, natural sentences of all work programmes from 1995 until 2012 are coded. This data is used to track changes in policy attention during the period from 1995-2012. A detailed description is given of the changes found in four specific policy areas: institutional operations; justice and home affairs; economic and financial policy; and social policy. For several of these policy areas, statistically significant correlations are found between changes in the level of attention for those policy areas and shifting political ideology of the Commission and the largest party in the European Parliament. Furthermore, although hard evidence for causal relationships between certain events, such as an economic crisis, and changing policy attention cannot be found due to the used methodology, a first step towards finding which events play a role in the causal processes that cause changes in the agenda can still be made.

To my family: for their endless support of, and patience with, me in my long journey through my studies.

To Jennifer: your presence and your faith in me made it possible for me to continue with my work even when I felt I would never reach this point.

Thank you!

*I've had a little bit too much to think tonight
But it's cool, I'll be alright, just make sure that I keep travellin'
~Atmosphere – In My Continental*

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1 Introduction

Throughout the years, agendas of political actors or institutions, or the policy fields that they are focussing on, have been the subject of numerous academic studies. The Policy Agendas Project, for example, aims to analyse the (change in) agendas of various actors in the United States, as described by John (2006), and Laver and Garry (2000) used political texts, party manifestos for example, in order to determine actors' positions on certain policies. These kinds of studies, however, mostly focus on political parties or national governments; the European Union (EU), and its institutions, is not a subject that has been studied in this fashion. Some authors have tried to describe how agenda setting processes within the EU work, see for example Kassim and Menon (2003); Pollack (1997); and Princen (2011), but none of them tried to find out what topics are actually on the agenda of one or more institutions of the EU. Especially in current times, with several (economic) crises following each other combined with (or maybe even causing) a worsening public opinions towards the EU (TNS Opinion & Social, 2012) it would be interesting to see what the European Union is actually focussing on¹.

Of course, it is very difficult to speak of 'the European Union' when the aim is to see what the EU is focussing on: there are many different actors (the Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, European Court of Justice, etc.) that are not necessarily paying attention to the same issues at the same time. In other words: in the EU, several different agendas might exist at the same time. A researcher therefore has to limit him- or herself to one of these institutions, unless said researcher has the time and funding to study all relevant EU institutions, of course. Because of that need for limiting a study to one actor, this thesis will focus on the European Commission. This decision has been made first and foremost because this is the actor that has the best possibilities to influence the focus of other actors (most notably the Council and the European Parliament). This point will be made clear in the second chapter of this thesis.

The aim of the study for this thesis is twofold: first of all, creating an instrument that can be used to measure the level of attention of the Commission for the policy areas it is concerned with, and, secondly, to describe changes and (possible) explanations for those changes in the issues on the Commission's agenda. One aspect of the kind of study as the current one that should be kept in mind, is that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to produce hard evidence for specific causal relations between events and changes in the agenda. As Gerring (2004) describes it, causality is a "black box" and researchers can attempt to look into that black box, but it is very difficult to "unpack the black box of causality" (Imai, Keele, Tingley, & Yamamoto, 2011, p. 785). However, a first attempt towards unpacking the processes in the black box by describing the content of the agenda of the Commission and relating it to certain events. As Gerring (2012) writes, such an exercise in describing change in itself can have the same academic value as a study which tries to fully establish a theory on causal

¹ And of course, it would be interesting to compare this to what the general population wants the Commission to focus on. This is, however, an issue that lies outside the scope of this thesis.

relations. Furthermore, as Gerring (2012, p. 13) also states: “(...) description of a topic usually precedes causal analysis of that topic.” This might be especially true for the subject of this thesis: because of a lack in studies of the Commission’s agenda, it is unknown if and what changes in that agenda occur. Therefore, it is important to first describe what changes have taken place before any attempt at fully and confidently establishing causal relations can be made.

In chapter two, a theoretical framework that describes agenda setting theory applied to the EU will be set out, followed by the research question and a number of hypotheses that will be tested. In chapter three, the methodology behind the study is explained, including a description of the newly created coding scheme. Chapter four contains a discussion of the findings from the study. This will start with some general observations, followed by more detailed discussions of the changes in attention for four different policy areas: institutional operations, justice and home affairs, economic and financial affairs, and social policy. These policy areas have been selected for a number of different reasons: the results of the content analysis show a continuing high level of attention for institutional operations, which warrants a more detailed discussion; based on political positioning, and policy priorities of the largest EP parties, attention for justice and home affairs is expected to increase; the same changes in political positioning is expected to lead to an observable increase in attention for economic policies, together with the effects of the 2008 and following economic and financial crises; and social policy will be discussed in order to see if a (by scholars) perceived decrease in attention for social policies can indeed be observed. This chapter will, of course, be followed by the conclusions, and answers to the research questions, and a short discussion of the limitations of this study.

2 Theoretical background and framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework on which this study is based will be described, followed by the central research question of the thesis and some hypotheses. The theoretical discussion will start with a discussion of agenda setting in the European Union. After this discussion of agenda setting within the institutional framework of the EU, the discussion will become more specific and focussed on the role of the European Commission in setting the agenda in the EU and it will be made clear why it is important to study what the Commission is focussing on. Finally, factors that might influence the position of the Commission will be presented.

After the discussion of agenda setting, and the importance of studying the policy focus of the European Commission, an overview of the evolution of the EU's social policies will be given, followed by a short discussion of the role of the Commission in the creation of social policy.

2.1 Agenda setting within the institutional framework of the European Union

Applying general ideas or theories on agenda setting to the European Union is unfortunately not entirely straight forward. Most agenda setting theories are based on national political and policy systems, whereas the EU is a system that is unlike any other in terms of the types of actors and the processes related to agenda setting and policy making (which is shown by the ongoing discussions on what the EU is, and what it will become. See for example Rosamond (2000), or Collard-Wrexler (2006)). There are, however, some points that can be taken from general theories on agenda setting and can be applied in the realm of the EU. The idea of a window of opportunity (Colebatch, 2006, p. 91; van de Graaf & Hoppe, 2000, p. 198), for example, is also applicable in the European Union. In general, such a window of opportunity arises whenever a certain problem, a possible solution for that problem (or 'policies,' in the words of Kingdon (1995, p. 16)), and political events related to the problem all appear at the same time (van de Graaf & Hoppe, 2000). This combination of political events, a problem, and one or more possible solutions for that problem is also applicable in the setting of the EU.

A good example of how such a window of opportunity works in practice might be the creation of the European Financial Stability Fund (EFSF): the EFSF was set up as a solution (or policy) after the economic crisis of 2008 (the problem) that led to attention for the problems in the financial markets from politicians.

Where it becomes a bit more difficult is determining what political events, or actors, are the ones that can play a part in creating such a window of opportunity. As Larsson and Trondal (2006, p. 17) write, some consider the EU to be a "paradise for agenda setting" because of the multitude of actors that are involved in the EU (national governments, lobby groups, EU institutions, etc.). There are authors that argue that the Council is the main actor that fills that role (e.g. Kreppel, 2010), and there are authors that argue that the Commission is the formal agenda setter ((e.g. Pollack, 1997, p. 106)).

Other authors make a distinction based on the decision making procedure that has to be used (according to EU Treaties). Such a perspective also shows that the Commission has a large influence when legislation is made using the co-decision procedure² (Tsebelis & Garrett, 1996). In this decision procedure, the Commission has a large amount of influence, since it holds the right of initiative, making it the only actor allowed to initiate policy or legislative proposals (how this exactly works and what the consequences of this procedure are will be discussed in more detail later).

Nugent furthermore goes on to describe the place of the Commission within the EU as a whole as “a core institution” that is “almost always invariably involved in some significant way” when activities of the EU are concerned (2010, p. 137). Even though he acknowledges the points made by Kreppel (2010) and Rasmussen (2007), amongst others, he writes the following on the perceived decline in influence of the Commission:

“The extent to which there was a decline in the position of the Commission should not be exaggerated. Certainly it has had to trim more than it would like, and it has suffered its share of political defeats – not least in its wish for stronger treaty-based powers. But it still commands extensive power resources, it still has key duties to undertake, and in some respects its powers have actually increased as it has adapted itself to the ever-changing nature of, and demands upon, the EU” (Nugent, 2010, pp. 137-138).

The decline that Nugent talks about has been observed by scholars ever since the Delors Commission left office. As Werts (2008, p. 49) describes, Jacques Delors was a very active (or maybe even activist) President of the Commission, who took the lead in many areas. After this Commission, the Member States tried to limit the influence and power of the Commission, as the quote from Nugent describes. Although these efforts may have been successful in some areas, the extent to which they have led to a serious limitation of the Commission’s influence remains unclear, as Nugent also notices in the quote above.

One of the power resources discussed by Nugent is the right of initiative. As discussed before, this right makes the actor that holds it the formal agenda setter. In most policy areas that the EU deals with, there is only one institution that has this right and that is the European Commission, based on Article 294 (TFEU) and further. These treaty provisions make the Commission the only actor within the European Union that is able to propose new legislation in many (if not most) policy areas that use the ordinary decision procedure of the European Union, as set out in the Article 294 (TFEU)³. Linking this power and the use of the ordinary decision procedure to a principal-agent approach towards the

² The co-decision procedure was renamed to ‘ordinary’ decision procedure when the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in 2009 ((also see: European Commission, 2012) for more information).

³ As Neill Nugent (Nugent, 2010, pp. 308-309) already noticed, after the Lisbon Treaty it has become easier to list the areas in which the EU uses a different decision procedure than the ordinary procedure. The list with all areas that use different decision procedures can be found in annex A. In those ‘special’ procedures, the role of the Commission is different, and as such its powers as formal agenda-setter is less influential than in policy areas where the ordinary procedure is followed.

position of the Commission⁴, we might expect that the Commission “may exploit differing preferences among member states, to avoid the imposition of sanctions against shirking and to “push through” legislative proposals via their formal agenda-setting powers” (Pollack, 1997, p. 129).

What makes the Commission even more interesting to study, is the fact that it basically acts like a cabinet government, similar to national governments. As Nugent (2010), and Hix and Høyland (2011) observe, every Commissioner has its own portfolio, much like national ministers, and they are supported by their directorates-general, which can be likened to national ministries. The Commission furthermore decides by an absolute majority, with every Commissioner having one vote, and all Commissioners are bound to support the decisions, even when they were part of a minority opposing a proposal (Hix & Høyland, 2011, pp. 35-37). This also implies that the political position of a single Commissioner is outweighed by the fact that decisions are made by an absolute majority. For example: when the Commission as a whole has a position on the left side of the political spectrum, an individual that is positioned on the right is expected to have little influence on what topics end up on the agenda.

When these characteristics are combined with the observation that the EU has more or less become a bicameral legislative system (Nugent, 2010, p. 321), where the Council and the European Parliament (EP) can be seen as equivalents of both chambers in a national system (for example the Bundesrat and the Bundestag in Germany, or the Senate and the House of Representatives in the USA), the role of the Commission seems very similar to the one of a national government, like the German or US government, that is responsible for most, if not all, proposed legislation (as is also the case in the Netherlands, see de Jong and Schuszler (2002, p. 63).

It would be unwise, however, to completely ignore the possible influence of national governments or the EP, because those institutions do indeed have some ways of influencing the proposed legislation by the Commission. For example: if there is a left-wing majority in Parliament, it might be expected that the Commission will propose more policies that are favoured by left-wing parties. And along the same line of thought: when most representatives in the Council are right-wing politicians, the Commission might choose to propose policies that are favoured by right-wing parties in order to get the policies approved. It therefore is important to see which parties were the largest from the 1994 elections until 2012.

A graphical overview of the composition of the European Parliament after the elections in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2010 can be found in annex B. Between the elections for the European Parliament from 1994 until 2012, the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the European People’s Party have been the largest parties in parliament (although neither has had an absolute majority). From 1994 until 1999, the PES was the largest party, since the 1999 elections the EPP has been the largest party. Even though no party has had a majority during the period studied for this study, it might still be possible

⁴ Principal-agent in this case means that the Member States of the EU (as the principals) have delegated powers to the Commission, because it is more efficient (and thus less expensive) to let the Commission take care of it. For a more detailed discussion of this theory applied to the EU, see Pollack (1997).

that the largest party in the EP has had a measurable influence on the Commission and its prioritisation of policy areas. In order to see if evidence for such an influence can indeed be found, it is of course necessary to determine which policy areas were of most importance to the PES from 1994 until 1999, and for the EPP in the years from 1999 until 2012. This will be done in chapter four, and it will be accompanied with an analysis of the political position of the largest parties during the 1994 – 2012 period (similar to the analysis of the position of the Commission).

2.1.1 Party politics in the European Commission?

A final issue that should be dealt with regarding the European Commission is concerned with the way that Commissioners are chosen. Even though currently every Member State has one Commissioner, all Commissioners are expected to be impartial and independent from their own government, in order to “promote the general interest of the Union” (Article 17, TEU). This impartiality and independence is not as clear cut in practice as it is in theory, however: every Member State selects a person to nominate for the Commission, and it is reasonable to expect that a Commissioner that has been nominated by his own government would look out for his own country (Nugent, 2010, p. 113).

When the composition of the European Commission throughout the period 1995-2012 is examined, it indeed shows that most Commissioners come from national political parties that are in government at the time the Commission was appointed⁵. The Dutch Commissioners, for example, all came from parties that were in government at the time that a new Commission was selected (Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA), Christian democrats, and Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), liberals, to be precise). Based on the findings of Hakhverdian (2009), it is then logical to expect that the agenda of the Commission will be skewed towards issues that are important to the political parties the Commissioners are coming from. Just like in a national setting, it might be expected that the agenda of the Commission will include more issues related to lowering costs or taxes instead of increasing public spending when most Commissioners are from right-wing parties for example (Benoit & Laver, 2006, pp. 84-85). Although Lindberg, Rasmussen, and Warntjen (2008) state that party politics do not play an important role within the Commission, it is still reasonable to expect that politicians will be focussing on issues according to their political position (even when they do not adhere to party politics and decide to focus on those issues independently). It should not be expected that a politician leaves his or her political ideology at the door when becoming a member of the European Commission just because he or she is expected to represent the EU and not his or her Member State.

⁵ Please note that the actual in-depth examination of the political positioning of the European Commission is included in chapter 4.

2.1.2 Policy priorities and position of political parties

Now that it is clear that (national party) political positioning is expected to play an important role in determining which issues reach the agenda of the Commission, it becomes important to determine which movement would cause a specific change in the agenda of the Commission. As an example of this question: if the Commission as a whole has a position on the left side and moves more towards the right, what effect would this have in terms of issues being put on or left off of the agenda?

As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, Benoit and Laver (2006) have shown that right-wing parties, for example, are more concerned with lowering public spending and taxes, whereas parties more on the left will focus more on issues such as social policies.

2.1.3 Political events influencing the Commission's agenda

As describe earlier in this chapter, windows of opportunity occur when three variables come together at the same time, with (political) events being one of those three. In the case of the EU, these can be either events that occur within the framework of the EU itself, or events happening outside of the EU.

A common political event that has the possibility of helping create a window of opportunity is the rotating presidency of the EU. Every six months, one Member State obtains the presidency of the EU and has the option to push subjects it finds important onto the agenda of the European Council. By doing so, it may also influence the Commission into paying attention to that policy area, because the Commission might be asked to draft up legislation to tackle issues that the current president finds important (Stiller & van Gerven, 2012).

Another political event (or process) that may influence the policy focus of the European Commission could be the process of enlargement. In the different enlargement processes, the Commission plays a number of roles. The Commission publishes yearly reviews of the progress made by candidate countries towards meeting the criteria that should be fulfilled in order to join the EU (European Commission, 2012b). These reports can be included in the advice the Commission gives to the European Council whenever the final decision on whether or not a candidate country is accepted should be made. This means that the policy field of enlargement could receive more attention in years leading up to a new 'wave' of enlargement. During the period that will be studied in this thesis, there has been one such wave (when the definition of the Commission is followed): it started in 2004 with the entry into the EU of ten new Member States, and it was concluded in 2007 with an additional two new members, bringing the total number of Member States to the current 27 (European Commission, 2011b). Since the Commission regards this as one, single process, it could be expected that a large increase in attention for enlargement takes place in the years leading up to 2004, and a smaller increase might be found in 2006, for example.

Other political events that may help create a window of opportunity can even lie outside the institutions of the EU. One example is the Bologna Process, which started in 1999 at the Bologna

Summit, which was held outside of the framework of the European Union (European Commission, 2011a). The Bologna process aims at reforming the field of higher education in order to “make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents” (European Commission, 2011a).

An example of the reforms discussed within the Bologna process is the change towards a (more or less) unified bachelor-master structure for higher education throughout Europe (Corbett, 2005). And, as Corbett also notes, the EU took up the area of higher education (linked to the creation of a European Research Area) during the 2000 Lisbon Council. The events surrounding the Bologna Process, and the response from the Commission, show that even political events that start outside of the EU can eventually force the Commission to increase the level of attention it devotes to particular policy areas.

A different example of an (international) political event that may influence the policy focus of the Commission is the adoption by numerous countries of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (European Union, 2011). This adoption of the Protocol, and the push towards ratification in 2002, may also have forced the Commission to pay more attention to energy policy in order to reach the goal set out in the Protocol.

A final event that may have caused an increase in attention for a certain policy area may be the scandal surrounding the European Commission led by Jacques Santer. This scandal centred around suspicions that one Commissioner was favouring people and companies she knew when issuing contracts, “financial mismanagement,” and the feeling that “the College as a whole had displayed general lack of responsibility for the Commission’s actions” (Nugent, 2010, p. 152). This scandal eventually led to the resignation of the Santer Commission 1999, after the publication report by an independent committee that reviewed the performance of the Commission. Because of the resulting concerns about the operations of the Commission (and possibly other institutions of the EU), this scandal may have led to an increased level of attention for the operations (and the organization of those operations) of the institutions of the EU. It cannot be stressed enough, however, that these types of causal relations cannot be confidently said to exist or not exist based on the eventual data obtained during this study.

2.2 Social policy in, and of, the European Union

One specific policy area that will be discussed in more detail is that of social policy. This policy field will be used as some sort of case study within this thesis, in order to more accurately describe what has happened in terms of attention for social policy. The reasoning behind selecting social policy as one of the main policy areas to focus on is basically the fact that scholars have observed a specific change in attention for this field. The events that have led to these observations will now be discussed in a bit more detail⁶.

⁶ Please note that some parts of this section have been published earlier in Derks (2011, pp. 3-5), which is the thesis written by the same author as this thesis.

From the very start of the processes that eventually led to the European Union as it currently exists, most attention has always been paid to the economic union, economic policies, and economic cooperation (McCormick, pp. 52-78). As a consequence of this, the EU was forced to deal with the free movement of goods, capital, services and labour, making these four freedoms basically the main issues for EU policies. Social policy was an area outside these ‘core’ policy fields, and as such no real attempts at creating European social policy had been made, except for some programmes that were meant to limit or reduce poverty⁷. This lack of activity in the area of social policy, mainly caused by refusal of the United Kingdom to participate in European social policies, lasted until the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 (although that Treaty did not result in immediate activity in the field of social policy). Even though the UK kept blocking a separate Treaty chapter devoted to social policy, the Maastricht treaty still gave options to move forward in the field of social policy, through a ‘Protocol on Social Policy’ (O’Connor, 2005, p. 347). The real turnaround came when a Labour government came into office in the UK in 1997⁸, and was not caused by changes on the EU level.

With the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, the Agreement on social policy was included in the main body of the Treaties. This agreement included the establishment of ‘high level employment’ as one of the EU’s specific objectives, together with mainstreaming of gender equality, ‘sustainable and non-inflationary growth, and convergence of economic performance including competitiveness’ (O’Connor, 2005, p. 348).

Nowadays, social policy of the EU, as described in Article 153(1) TFEU, includes a broad range of topics, for example: poverty, social exclusion (which includes all forms of discrimination (European Commission, 2012d)), pensions, health and safety at work, social protection systems. The complete list for areas of social policy in which the EU is allowed to act can be found in figure 2-1.

At the end of the 1990s, attention for EU social policies started to increase, as did the activity in this area: at the 2000 Lisbon Council, the Member States agreed to developing national plans to ‘tackle

Figure 2-1: Article 153(1) TFEU

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improvement in particular of the working environment to protect worker’s health and safety; b) Working conditions; c) Social security and social protection;* d) Protection of workers where their employment contract is terminated;* e) The information and consultation of workers; f) Representation and collective defence of workers and employers, including co-determination, subject to paragraph 5;* g) Conditions for employment for third-country nationals legally residing in Union territory;* h) The integration of persons excluded from the labour market, without prejudice to Article 166;** i) Equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities; j) The combating of social exclusion; k) The modernisation of social protection systems without prejudice to point (c); <p>* In these areas, special decision procedures are used
 ** Article 166 is concerned with vocational training</p> |
|---|

⁷ “The pilot schemes and studies to combat poverty” in the second half of the 1970s, and the programme “concerning the economic and social integration of economically and socially less privileged groups” and the “second poverty programme” in the mid to late 1980s (O’Connor, 2005, p. 359)

⁸ It should be noted that this was part of a bigger shift towards more leftist governments occurring in most Member States, not just the UK (van Gerven, 2008, pp. 20-25). It can be argued, however, that the fact that a leftist government came into office in the Member State that was the biggest opponent of EU activity regarding social policy was one of the biggest factors in clearing the way for the creation of a Social Protocol.

poverty and social exclusion,' and they furthermore agreed that these plans would be integrated into the already existing national social policies (which were to be implemented and monitored through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)). These agreements were further elaborated during the Nice Council (2000), where Member States also agreed on using regular monitoring and peer review in order to ensure compliance with the agreements. The Nice Council also created agreement on the European Social Policy Agenda, an initiative that essentially mirrored the White Paper the Commission wrote six years earlier, showing that the Council had finally caught up with the ambitions of the Commission (O'Connor, 2005, p. 349).

One observation on the Open Method of Coordination, made by Haahr (2004), is that it also might be seen as a shift towards more neo-liberal governing, instead of the social-democratic way of operating that was present until the mid to late 1990s. This change can also be seen in light of the shift towards the right of the political spectrum for the European Parliament and the European Commission. This change towards more right-wing, or neo-liberalist, policies may also lead to less attention for social policy, similar to the effects of the shift towards the right by the EP and Commission.

All the activities related to the OMC eventually caused that several different processes of the OMC were used at the same time. To solve this multitude of processes, they were streamlined in 2006 (Marlier, 2007, pp. 39-41; O'Connor, 2005, p. 40), after which it seems that activity in social policy died down. This has caused some observers (Tilford & Whyte, 2009; Wanlin, 2006) to feel that attention for social policy has been declining in favour of other policies. This feeling could be caused by the massive amount of attention (mainstream) media are paying to the economic crisis and its aftermath since 2008. It can also be seen in publications like the Lisbon Scorecards by the Centre for European Reform⁹. Where the Lisbon Scorecard of 2006 devotes attention to the way in which the European Union should pay attention to reform of social security systems, the Lisbon Scorecard from 2009 only briefly mentions education as an important goal, while giving a lot of attention to the economy and economic reforms (Tilford & Whyte, 2009; Wanlin, 2006). When looking at the more mainstream media, a glance at the website of EU observer shows that nowadays most articles published are about the resolution of the current financial crisis, and the consequences for national governments of the crisis, with little other subjects (EUobserver, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

2.2.1 Actors in the field of EU social policy: Commission, Council, Parliament

When it comes to social policy, it can be argued that the European Commission has been the front-runner in trying to advance European social policy: in 1994 it published a white paper on the connection between the economic goals, which were present from the start of the EU, and social goals of the EU. This was the White Paper on Social Policy (O'Connor, 2005, p. 349). The publication of this white paper shows that the Commission was very interested in moving forward with the social

⁹ Lisbon Scorecards are yearly publications that tend to test how far the EU has come in following up on the Lisbon goals

dimension of the EU at that time, whereas the Council was more hesitant, showcased for example by its rejection of a proposed programme meant to “combat social exclusion and promote solidarity” (O'Connor, 2005, p. 359). The negative attitude from the Council towards social policy was an important obstacle for the Commission: in the early 1990s, the Council was still the actor that had the formal power to act (or refuse to act) in the field of social policy. In other words: without the support of the Council, any proposal by the Commission would most likely be rejected.

After several Treaty revisions in the late 1990s and 2000s, the Commission has taken over the role of formal agenda setter for the majority of areas in which the EU has the mandate to act (with regard to social policies), based on Article 153(1) TFEU. A complete overview of the areas that the EU may act in can be seen in figure 1. For most of those areas, the ordinary decision procedure is to be followed, and as discussed earlier that gives the Commission the exclusive right of initiative. The Council and Parliament have, of course, the possibilities to amend proposals from the Commission, but they cannot initiate their own proposals, basically leaving it up to the Commission to decide whether or not attention will be paid to certain matters.

Another role the Commission has is a monitoring function in the areas that are governed through the Open Method of Coordination. This method does not rely on binding legislation, but is based on “co-operation, reciprocal learning and the voluntary participation of the Member States” (Heidenreich & Bischoff, 2008, p. 499). The Commission plays a role in this process by monitoring and reporting the progress of the Member States, which puts pressure on the Member States to meet the agreed upon measures.

2.3 Research question and hypotheses

Based on the previously described theoretical background, it should have become clear that the Commission is a very important actor in directing the attention to certain policy areas. Because of this importance, it is very interesting to see how the agenda of the Commission changes over time, and what the causes for these changes might be. The research question for this thesis is the following:

“How has the agenda of the European Commission changed in the period from 1995 until 2012 and how can we explain the changes that are found?”

In order to answer this question, several sub questions have been formulated:

- How did the political left-right position of the Commission change during the period 1995 – 2012?
- How did the political left-right position of the largest party in the European Parliament change during the period 1995 - 2012?
- What were the most important policy areas for the party that became the largest party after the European Parliament elections in 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009?
- How has the agenda of the European Commission changed during the period 1995 – 2012?
- How can the observed changes in the agenda of the European Commission be explained?

Regarding these research questions, four hypotheses are formulated¹⁰:

- H1 Depending on the direction of a change in political positioning of the Commission, attention for leftist policies (social policy, for example), will increase (if the Commission becomes more leftist) or decrease (with a move to the right).
- H2 Depending on the direction of a change in political positioning of the largest party in the European Parliament attention for 'leftist' policies (social policies, for example) will increase (if the largest party becomes more leftist) or decrease (with a move to the right).
- H3 Attention for social policy will peak around 2000, after which the amount of attention for social policy will decline.
- H4 The economic and financial crises that started in 2008 have led to an increased level of attention for economic issues from 2008 onwards.
- H5 The scandal concerning the Santer Commission at the end of the 1990s (Nugent, 2010, p. 107) has led to an increased level of attention for institutional operations.

¹⁰ Please note that H1 and H2 are formulated in general terms. This is done because the political positioning of the political actors is currently unknown. After the discussion of the findings on political positioning, in chapter 4, these hypotheses will be combined with expectations that are more concrete, based on the political positions found.

3 Methodology

In order to find out how the agenda of the European Commission was actually composed the work programmes of the Commission from 1995 until 2012 will be examined. The study of these programmes will be done by analysing the contents of the documents. The programmes will be studied qualitatively by coding each sentence in one of nineteen different policy categories (see Annex C). In this chapter, the design of the coding scheme will be discussed in order to make clear why these categories have been chosen.

This chapter will start with an explanation of why the work programmes will be studied, and not any other types of documents or events. After this, the coding scheme that will be used for the study will be discussed. The discussion of the coding scheme will be followed by a description of intercoder reliability, and the importance of a high intercoder reliability, which will include an explanation of how the intercoder reliability of the coding scheme is checked.

3.1 *Document selection*

When academics want to study the topics that get attention from politicians, or when they want to find where a party or government should be placed on a left-right scale, they often use political speeches, policy proposals, and other documents as the source from which they try to gather the information they need. Moen (1988) for example studied the State of the Union speeches of Ronald Reagan in order to see if and how the legislative agenda of Reagan changed during his presidency; Laver and Garry (2000) analysed the contents of party manifestos in Britain and Ireland from 1992 and 1997 in order to determine the policy positions of the different political parties; and Pennings (2006) analysed party manifestos of political parties from EU Member States in order to determine when, and why, parties tend to “acknowledge the increasing impact of Europe on policy-making” (p. 257).

Where it is rather logical to examine party manifestos, or State of the Union Addresses when one wants to study the position (or change in position) of a political party or president, finding suitable documents for the European Commission is a bit harder. Since it has become clear that the Commission is actually behaving like a cabinet government (as explained in chapter 2) similar to national governments, it would be best to find documents that are similar to a State of the Union address. Unfortunately, although nowadays the Commission President is scheduled to give a yearly State of the Union address, this is not a useful document to analyse. The simple reason for this is that the very first of these addresses was given in 2010 (Barroso, 2010), which makes it impossible to study the agenda of the Commission in the years before 2010 through these speeches.

Other publications that could be used to study the agenda and policy focus of the Commission are the political guidelines, which are published every time a new Commission comes into office (see for example Barroso (2009)). In other words: these guidelines describe the general direction that the

Commission wants to take in the coming five years. This is also the problem when these political guidelines would be used for the current study: they are only published when a Commission comes into office, and are not updated during that term. This means that they can only be used to determine whether or not there is a difference in the general focus of different Commissions when they come into office, and they are not useful to study changes that might occur during the time in office of a Commission.

The only documents that allow for an insight in the overall policy focus of the Commission that are updated on a regular (yearly) basis and that are available for years before 2010 are the Commission's work programmes. In these work programmes, the Commission translates "the President's political guidelines and the State of the Union address" into action (EPP Group, 2012). Or in other words: the work programmes describe which actions the Commission is planning to take to come closer to the goals set out in the political guidelines or State of the Union addresses. Furthermore, other actors within the EU's institutions have articulated their views on the work programmes, showing that the work programmes are not only important to the Commission but also to other actors. For example: the European People's Party, currently the largest party in the European Parliament, describes the Work Programmes as "extremely important" (EPP Group, 2012).

The work programmes that will be used for this study will be only the "core" texts. This means that everything outside of the main text (meaning: table of contents, lists of figures, annexes, etc.) will not be included in the analysis. The programmes will be coded using natural sentences, as described by Däubler, Benoît, Mikhaylov, and Laver (2012). A natural sentence by this definition means that the sentence starts with a capital letter, and ends with one of four delimiters: '.', '?', '!', ';'. Items in (bullet-pointed) lists will be considered as individual sentences and as such will be coded separately (Däubler et al., 2012, p. 6). Using natural sentences makes the results more reliable compared to using quasi-sentences, because it leaves no room for interpretation on where a sentence starts and stops. In other words: all units that have to be coded are predetermined. Commas are specifically excluded from the list of sentence delimiters, because including them would produce a large number of units with no useful contents. For example: using commas as delimiters would mean that phrases such as "a year ago," and even single words such as "moreover," and "furthermore," would have to be coded. Whenever sentences mention multiple policy areas, that initial sentence will be coded into the category for the first policy area mentioned. When the following sentence is not specifically referring to a single policy area, that sentence will be coded into the second category mentioned (in the previous sentence), and so on.

Of course, there are other units that could be used when coding the work programmes. The Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) and the Euromanifestos Project, for example, both use quasi-sentences as the units to be coded, which means that a single (complex) sentence is divided into different units to be coded. Although such an approach may help in situations where one sentence discusses issues that fall into different coding categories, (Däubler et al., 2012) show that using

natural sentences produces results that are as valid as results obtained while using quasi-sentences. Furthermore, as (Benoit, Laver, & Mikhaylov, 2007, p. 5) observe in the results of the CMP, “this means that the total number of quasi-sentences identified for any given manifesto does in fact vary substantially among different coders.” In other words: the benefit of using natural sentences compared to quasi-sentences is that coding natural sentences (theoretically) produce more reliable results, while not losing value in terms of validity.

3.2 Coding scheme

The coding of the work programmes will be done by coding every sentence into one of the twenty categories from the coding scheme. The complete coding scheme, including instructions on how it should be applied, can be found in annex C. The list of categories that have been defined for this scheme can be found in table 3-1. These categories have been chosen after looking at three different sources. First of all, the different Commission portfolio’s that have been active during the period from 1995 until 2012 have been examined. This list has been combined with the current list of Directorates-

Table 3-1: Policy categories in the coding scheme

0. Empty	10. Foreign relations and foreign aid
1. Agriculture	11. Institutional operations
2. Competition	12. Health and consumer protection
3. Economic and financial/monetary affairs	13. Information society and media
4. Education	14. Internal market, taxation and customs union
5. Energy	15. Justice and home affairs
6. Enlargement	16. Maritime affairs and fisheries
7. Enterprise and industry	17. Research and innovation
8. Environment and climate action	18. Social policy
9. External trade	19. Transport

General of the Commission, in order to see which subjects have always been present and as such can be expected to also be present in the work programmes throughout the years. Furthermore, the Policy Agenda’s Project codebook has been used as a third source for potential categories.

Policy areas that occurred regularly in all three sources were included in the scheme immediately. Other areas that did not occur in all three, but might be expected to be important to the EU, have been included as well. An example of such a policy area is the category “enlargement”. This topic, of course, does not appear in the codebook of the Policy Agenda’s Project, as that is aimed at the situation in the United States. In the EU, however, it can be expected that this is, or was, an area that garnered a lot of attention, especially with the enlargement process that finished in 2007.

Overlap between categories has been prevented as much as possible by including instructions on what to do when two (or more) categories could potentially overlap. One could make a case, for example, that the trade with third countries in agricultural products should fall in agriculture on the one hand, or in the category of external trade. In this scheme, the choice has been made to include any discussions of such trade in the external trade category, since such discussions are expected to be

mostly about trading with third countries, and not about the specific product to be traded. Again, the complete coding scheme, including these instructions and clarifications, can be found in annex C.

3.2.1 Intercode reliability

One very important aspect of a (qualitative) content analysis is the quality of the coding scheme that will be used. In order to make sure that the coding scheme that is used will produce the same results regardless of the person coding the documents, the intercode reliability (or reproducibility in the words of Krippendorff) of the scheme has to be checked. This is one of the three types of reliability Krippendorff discusses, the other two being stability and accuracy (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 215). Of these three types of, reproducibility is the one that has the best trade-off between strength of the measure of reliability and costs of performing all tests necessary to determine the reliability of the coding scheme (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 215). Reproducibility is therefore the type of reliability that strikes the right balance between strength of measuring reliability on the one hand, and limited costs.

There are different measures for checking reproducibility or intercode reliability, such as Cohen's kappa and Krippendorff's alpha. Hayes and Krippendorff (2007) write that Krippendorff's alpha is the best measure of intercode reliability because "it generalizes across scales of measurement; can be used with any number of observers, with or without missing data; and it satisfies all of the important criteria for a good measure of reliability"(Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007, p. 78). Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2002, p. 592)also state that Krippendorff's alpha is useful for most situations, and its biggest issue is its complex nature and the difficulty that brings when it is to be calculated by hand. This problem, however, is not an issue when a plugin for SPSS that can calculate Krippendorff's alpha is used¹¹. Because of the many advantages of Krippendorff's alpha and the fact that it can be calculated easily through SPSS, alpha is the measure that will be used to check the reliability of the coding scheme.

Intercode reliability has been checked by having two individual coders code a randomly chosen work programme. Their results are then put into SPSS in order to calculate alpha.

The results from the first test for alpha can be found in table 3-2.

Table 3-2: Krippendorff's alpha for the first draft coding scheme

	Alpha	LL 95% CI	UP 95% CI	Units	Observers	Pairs
Nominal	.5802	.5039	.6565	176	2	176

Number of bootstrap samples: 1000

As can be seen, alpha was 0.5802 for the first tested draft of the coding scheme. Krippendorff tries to refrain from giving clear cut numbers for acceptable and unacceptable levels of reliability (because the required level of reliability depends on the study that is done (Krippendorff, 2004, pp. 243-242)).

¹¹ See Hayes (2012) for more information on this plugin, including a detailed explanation of how it works and how it should be used.

A level of 0.5802, however, is rather low in any case. In order to obtain a higher level of reliability, a few adjustments to the coding scheme have been made. The result of these adjustments is the coding scheme that can be found in annex C, which is also the scheme that has been used for the coding of all the work programmes. After these adjustments, a different randomly chosen work programme has been coded by (the same) two coders, and Krippendorff's alpha has been calculated again. The results of this second test can be found in table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Krippendorff's alpha for final coding scheme

	Alpha	LL 95% CI	UP 95% CI	Units	Observers	Pairs
Nominal	.7699	.7008	.8389	225	2	225

Number of bootstrap samples: 1000

After the adjustments, alpha is now reported to be 0.7699. This is an acceptable level of reliability, especially in studies as the current one, where the aim is to describe changes and draw “tentative conclusions”, and without any risk for serious harm as a consequence of the conclusions drawn at the end of this thesis (Krippendorff recommends an alpha of at least 0.8 for studies that might have more serious consequences (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 241)). This level of reliability is also (much) higher than the reliability of both the Comparative Manifestos Project and the Euromanifestos Project (which is applies the approach of the CMP to European elections (European Election Studies, 2008)). As Gemenis (forthcoming, pp. 9-13) observes, reliability of the CMP results have been questioned for a long time already. And in a study of the reliability of the CMP by Mikhaylov, Laver, and Benoit report a level of reliability of 0.31 – 0.32. In the words of these authors, this level of reliability is “exceptionally poor by conventional standards” (Mikhaylov, Laver, & Benoit, 2012, p. 84). So unlike other long-running projects that use political texts for content analysis, the coding scheme devised for this study has a level of reliability that comes close to the standard the Krippendorff (albeit tentatively) describes as the one that researchers should aim for.

3.2.2 Determining policy priorities and political positioning of actors

As was described in chapter two, it is expected that political parties in the European Parliament have the opportunity to influence the direction in which the Commission focusses its attention. In order to determine the direction of the expected influence of the largest party in Parliament on the agenda of the Commission, two methods can be used: either general measure of policy position of the parties on a left-right scale, or on an analysis of the policy priorities as described by the political parties themselves. In order to have a good foundation for the hypotheses of this thesis, both methods will be used.

In order to determine which policy areas are important to the PES and the EPP, the election manifestos for the EP elections in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009 have been analysed, using the same coding scheme as the one that will be used for the main research for this thesis. The manifestos are mainly coded by page, meaning that every page will be coded into one of the categories. Whenever it

was clear that one page is clearly discussing two different policy areas (for example, half of the page discusses social policy, and the second half discusses foreign relations), it will be coded as 0.5 pages for both. In order to have comparable results, the outcomes of the analysis have been converted into percentages of the total number of pages for every programme.

Of course, there is also the option of using the data that is gathered through the Euromanifestos Project (The Euromanifestos Project, 2009). This is a project that has coded the party manifestos of parties that take part in the elections for the EP. For this study, however, this data is very hard to use, because the policy areas defined in the studies done by the Euromanifestos Project do not correspond with the categories set out in the coding scheme for this study. It would take too much time to determine which categories of the Euromanifestos data corresponds with which categories of this coding scheme, and subsequently recoding all that data into new variables in order to determine which areas are the most important ones.

As said earlier, the more general left-right indication of the largest party in the EP will also be determined, mainly by using data from the Chapel Hill expert surveys (CHES)¹². As Hooghe, Bakker, Brigeovich, Vries, et al. (2010, p. 687) mentions, these expert surveys focus, among other goals, on monitoring the “ideological positioning of political parties on a general left/right dimension. This is done by sending surveys to expert researchers in all countries where the political parties are to be monitored. Those national experts are asked to fill in the survey for all national political parties (unless it is a party they are not familiar with). Only the parties that have received scores from at least four different experts are included in the final report (Hooghe, Bakker, Brigeovich, Vries, et al., 2010, p. 692).

Although multiple of these types of surveys exist, the choice has been made to only use the Chapel Hill series of expert surveys. First of all, this ensures that political positions can be confidently compared to each other, because they have been determined using the same methodology (i.e. the same questions and response scales). A second reason for using one set of expert surveys is the fact that this ensures that all positions are measured on the same scale. The Chapel Hill surveys measure left-right positioning on a ten-point scale, with 1 being the most left position, and 10 being the most right. Other expert surveys, for example the Benoit and Laver (2006) , studies use a scale from one to twenty. Although it is of course possible to recode those values into a ten-point scale, this is work that is unnecessary because of the regular publications of the Chapel Hill series.

Finally, the Chapel Hill expert surveys have been conducted at different times during the entire period that is examined in the current study. Even though the surveys are not necessarily conducted in the exact year that the European Parliament changed, for example the expert survey from 1996 will be used to determine positioning for the PES in the period from 1994 – 1999, this is not a problem. All surveys measure policy position at some point in the period that has to be examined, and although

¹² (Bakker et al., 2012; Hooghe, Bakker, Brigeovich, de Vries, et al., 2010; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007)

minor changes throughout such a period may occur, it is not expected that these changes will be large enough to change the outcomes of this study.

The choice to not use the data from (McElroy & Benoit, 2011) has been made based on the fact that the study from McElroy and Benoit has been done only 2004, 2007 and 2009. This makes the data they gather not very useful for this study, because no results from years before 2004 are available. Therefore the decision has been made to rely solely on the CHES data in order to ensure that all data used is comparable to each other, which as a result means that differences in how the data have been gathered will not attribute to any observed change.

The positions of the parties will be calculated as follows: first, the proportion of seats for every national party belonging to the European party group is determined. This proportion is then multiplied with the left-right position of the national party (on a ten-point scale, with 1 being most left and 10 being most right), as determined by expert surveys. These results for all national parties belonging to the party in the EP are then added up, which results in the left-right position of the EP party.

For example: after the 1994 elections, the PES was the largest party in the EP with a total of 198 seats. Of these 198, The German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) had 40 seats, which is a proportion of 0.202; the position of the SPD on a left-right scale was determined to be 3.83. When this proportion of 0.202 is multiplied with the position from the expert survey of 3.83 results in a weighted position of 0.77 for the SPD.

In order to determine the political position (left-right) of the Commission as a whole, expert surveys will be used again. Every Commissioner is scored with the value of his or her national party, after which the average score for all Commissioners will be calculated. This is done by adding up all the scores for the individual Commissioners and dividing the total score by the number of Commissioners (at the time the Commission came into office).

3.3 Analysis of the findings

The first step that will be made when analysing the results of the content analysis is the description of trends that are observed in the attention for specific policy areas. This means that the increases and decreases in attention for a policy area throughout the work programmes will be identified, as well as identifying years in which an observed increase is significantly different from the average level of attention for that policy area. To check the significance of a difference, t-tests will be used with an α of 0.05, meaning that a difference will be deemed significant if the P-value resulting from the t-test is smaller than 0.05. Such t-tests will also be conducted in order to see whether or not there is a significant difference in policy attention between the four Commissions that were in office in the period that will be studied.

A second step in analysing the trends is to calculate the correlation between the attention for a policy area and possible related other variables, such as the political (left-right) positioning of the European Parliament or the European Commission. This will be done by calculating Pearson's R through SPSS.

Of course, t-tests and correlation do not give any indication for variables that are causing specific increases in attention. Some variables that may cause an increase in attention have been identified in chapter 2 (political events, external events, etc.), but the results from the content analysis itself do not allow for determining if causal relations are present. In order to have an idea of what may have caused the observed changes, the contents of the sentences that are coded into the category for that policy area will be reviewed. Although will not give enough hard evidence to establish causal relationships between events and changes in the agenda of the Commission, this analysis can give important insights on the causal processes that are going on (Collier, Brady, & Seawright, 2004). This will show if the Commission is referring to specific events in those sentences, and accordingly it can be determined whether or not specific events have contribute to an increase in the amount of attention. For example: if an increase in attention for economic policy is found in the work programme for 2009, it is expected that this increase is caused by the economic crisis that started in 2008. If that crisis is indeed the reason why the Commission is devoting more attention to economic policy, it is reasonable to expect that the crisis will be referred to by the Commission in sentences that are coded in the category for economic policy.

4 Findings

In this chapter, the findings from the content analysis of the work programmes of the European Commission are presented. To start, a general overview of the trends (or changes) regarding policy areas that are not immediately related to the hypotheses set out in chapter two will be given. This general overview will also include a more detailed look at the attention for institutional operations, because that policy area appears to have received the most attention in the majority of the work programmes and it might be interesting to see if an explanation for that can be found in the work programmes.

The general discussion will be followed by a discussion of the developments in the fields of justice and home affairs and economic and financial/monetary affairs (because it is expected that attention for these two areas will increase after 1999, or 2008 in the case of economic/financial affairs). After that, the changes in the amount of attention being paid to social policy will be discussed.

The complete table with results for every policy area or the entire period studied can be found in annex D.

4.1 *Political positioning of the Commission and the European Parliament*

A first step that has to be made before continuing to the discussion of any changes observed in policy attention of the Commission is determining the position of the Commission and the largest party in Parliament on a left-right scale and determining which policy areas are preferred by the largest political party.

4.1.1 **Left-right positioning of the European Commission**

As described in chapter 3, the positioning of the Commissioners has been determined through the use of expert surveys, where the position of every Commissioner was taken from the score his or her national political party received in the expert survey. After adding all scores, the average left-right score for every Commission in office during the period studied has been calculated. The results per Commission can be found in table 4-1, the scores per individual Commission member are found in annex E.

Table 4-1: Commission position (left-right)

Commission (year)	Political position*
Santer (1994 – 1999)	4.85
Prodi (1999 – 2004)	4.87
Barroso I (2004 – 2009)	5.89
Barroso II (2009 – 2014)	6.11

* Political position is measured on a scale from 1 (most left) to 10 (most) right

As can be seen in table 4-1, the average position of the Commission has moved from a little to the left of the political middle (4.85 on a scale from 1 to 10 for the Santer Commission) towards the right of the political spectrum (6.11 for the second Barroso Commission in 2010). Combining this with the

general hypotheses formulated in chapter two on differing policy preferences between left and right wing political parties, this leads to an expectation that the Commission will start focusing more on ‘right-wing’ policies (cutting costs, administrative burdens), and less on ‘left-wing’ policies, such as social policies.

When looking at the position of the Commissioners responsible for social policy, one policy area that will be studied more closely, it is interesting to note that the change is more or less the opposite of what happened with the Commission in general: from 1995 until 1999, the Commissioner for unemployment and social affairs, Padraig Flynn, was a member of a political party that scored a 6.50 on a 10-point left-to-right scale. In the years after that, it changed to 3.91 (Anna Diamantopoulou, 1999 – 2004), 3.43 (Vladimír Špidla, 2004 – 2009) and the party of the current Commissioner, László Andor, scores 3.35.

Because the Commission takes decisions by an absolute majority, it should not be expected that the shift from right to left for the individual Commissioner for social policies will cause an increase of attention for that policy area. It is more likely that the change in left-right position of the Commission as a whole is more important and will take precedence over the individual changes. This is, however, still a situation that can be studied in order to see if a significant covariation between the position of the Commissioner for social policy and the amount of attention paid to social policies is observed.

4.1.2 Left-right positioning of the largest party in the European Parliament

As set out in chapter 3, determining the political position of the largest party in the EP is done by weighting every national parties share in the total number of seats of the EP party. This has resulted in the weighted policy position of the PES (for 1994) and the EPP (which became the largest party after the EP elections in 1999, 2004, and 2009). The results can be found in table 4-2.

Table 4-2: Left-right position of the largest party in the European Parliament

Year (largest party)	Political position
1994 (PES)	4.02
1999 (EPP)	6.42
2004 (EPP)	6.58
2009 (EPP)	6.31

Looking at these numbers, it is clear that the changes in left-right positioning of the largest party in the EP has followed roughly the same line as the change in the Commission. Where the largest party was located to the left of the political middle in 1994, it moved toward the right in the 1999 election, with the EPP becoming (and staying, in later elections) the largest party in Parliament. This leads to the same expectation as the one caused by the shift in political position of the Commission: with the shift towards the right, it is expected that the policy focus of the Commission will move towards more right-wing policies.

4.1.3 Policy priorities of the largest party in the European Parliament

In order to determine which policy areas are important to the PES and the EPP, the election manifestos for the EP elections in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009 have been analysed, using the same coding scheme as the one that will be used for the main research for this thesis. The five policy areas that received the most attention from the party that became the largest party after that election can be found in table 4-3.

Table 4-3: Policy priorities of the largest party in the EP

1994 (PES)		1999 (EPP)		2004 (EPP)		2009 (EPP)	
Social policy	19.44%	Justice and home affairs	19.51%	Economic policy	29.73%	Justice and home affairs	25%
Foreign relations	16.67%	Social policy	16.91%	Justice and home affairs	21.62%	Economic policy	15.63%
Institutional operations	13.89%	Education	11.70%	Foreign relations	17.57%	Foreign relations	12.5%
Justice and home affairs	11.11%	Institutional operations	11.70%	Environment	16.22%	Consumer and health protection	12.5%
Economic policy	9.26%	Economic policy	3.5%	Institutional operations	8.11%	Social policy	9.38%
Environment	9.26%						

As can be seen in table 4-3, there are only two policy areas that are present in every year examined: justice and home affairs and economic and financial/monetary affairs are one of the five most important policy areas for the parties that have been the largest in the EP. Moreover, after 1999 (for justice and home affairs) and after 2004 (for economic and financial policy) these policy areas are the two most important policy areas for the largest party at that time (which was the EPP). Two other areas that are present for three of the four party programmes studied are social policy and foreign relations. This list of policy priorities leads to an expectation that, if the largest EP party indeed has an influence on the policy focus of the Commission, attention for justice and home affairs and economic and financial policy will increase after 1999 and 2004, respectively.

4.2 Analysing the work programmes

In this section, the results from the actual content analysis of the work programmes will be discussed. This will start with some general observations regarding the findings linked to events mentioned in chapter two (the Bologna process and the Kyoto Protocol, for example), which will be followed by more in-depth discussions of the results concerning the areas of institutional operations, justice and home affairs, economic and financial/monetary affairs, and social policy. These four policy areas will be discussed in more detail either because the results warrant a more in-depth examination (institutional operations), or because increases or decreases in the amount of attention devoted to those areas are expected (economic policy and justice and home affairs, and social policy, respectively).

4.2.1 General observations

Because of the discussion of the Bologna process, and consequently the expectation that interest for the field of education would increase, in chapter two, it is interesting to shortly discuss the changes and developments for that area found in the work programmes. As said before: it is expected that the Bologna process (starting at the end of the 1990s) and the results from the Lisbon Council in 2000 would result in an increase in attention for education. Generally speaking, however, the work programmes never show a sign of sustained increase in attention for education. The highest amount of attention recorded for education was 3.29% in 2000. In other words: the results from this study show no sign of an increase in attention for education as a policy area after the start of the Bologna process and the 2000 Lisbon Council meeting.

A second interesting policy area is the field of energy policy, as has also been described in chapter two. Attention for energy policies has been relatively low throughout the entire body of work programmes studied, but there are two years that show a clear increase in attention paid to energy policy. In 2007 and 2009, the Commission devoted 5.33% and 4.55% of its work programmes to energy policy, which is a significant increase from the average attention that is paid to energy policy (which is 1.84% of the work programmes). The peak in the work programme for 2009 may be caused by the crisis in Georgia in 2008 which led to problems in the gas supply to EU Member States. In the words of the Commission, these “events have also shown that this is a critical time for energy security and that the EU needs to intensify its efforts with regard to the security of energy supply” (Commission of the European Communities, 2008, p. 3). A reference to these developments in Georgia cannot be found in the work programme for 2009 itself, but the Commission does discuss a hike in energy prices as something that it has to deal with in 2009.

An explanation for the 2007 increase is more difficult to give, although one may argue that this is caused by the increase in energy prices that had been going on for most of the 2000s already at that point. This would not explain why this increase in attention for energy policy manifested in 2007, and not in 2006 or 2008, for example.

Another area that might illustrate the influence of external political events is the field of environmental policy and climate action. There is some variation from year to year, but only one remarkable peak is found. In 2001, 10.18% of the work programme is dedicated to environmental policy, while the average for all work programmes is 5.44%. This peak may be caused by two events. First there is the fact that the Commission had to present a draft for the EU’s Sixth Environmental Action Programme, which of course might lead to more attention for environmental policy in 2001 than in years where such a programme is already in place. A second explanation might be the Kyoto Protocol. Although this protocol was already signed in 1997, it was only ratified in 2002. The Commission was already anticipating on this ratification in 2001: “*after the Kyoto Protocol has been ratified as anticipated*” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001a, p. 12). This anticipation

may have led the Commission to already start focussing on environmental policy more, in order to be ready to immediately implement policies once the Kyoto Protocol had been ratified.

A last category that might be interesting to examine a bit more closely is enlargement. During the period that was studied, one 'wave' of enlargement has been completed with the entry into the EU of ten new Member States in 2004, and additional two in 2007. This might have caused an increase in attention for the policy area for enlargement, because preparations to make sure that everything is ready and the EU will be able to function in an enlarged situation would have to be made.

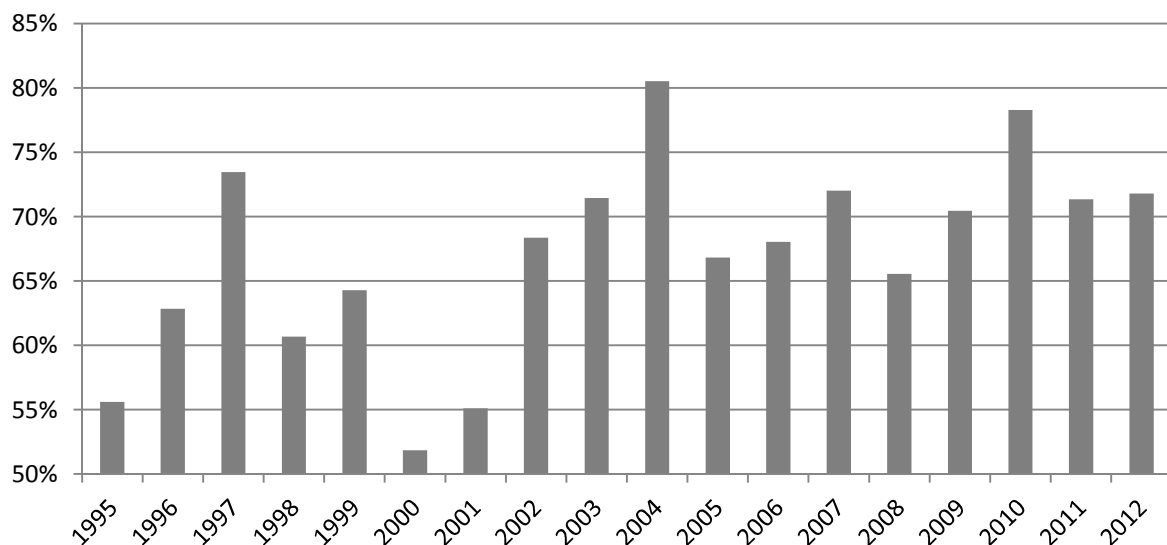
From the results of the analysis, it might be said that there is indeed a significant increase in attention for policies related to the enlargement process in 2003 and 2004. While the average amount of attention for enlargement is 4.74%, the percentage of the work programmes for 2003 and 2004 devoted to the process of enlargement raises to 15.97% and 14.47%. Based on the data gathered for this study, it is of course not possible to claim with absolute truth that this caused by the enlargement process that was finalized in 2004, but the relation between these two events seems rather evident. Especially when one takes into consideration the fact that attention for enlargement drops off significantly after 2004. During the years from 2005 until 2012, enlargement never gets more than 2.73% (in 2005) of the work programmes devoted to it.

Diversity in policy attention

One final discussion that is interesting to include here, is the changes in the concentration of policy focus from the Commission, which in this case is seen as the percentage devoted to the five policy areas with the highest level of attention compared to the other policy categories. In other words: when the five policy areas that receive the most attention are responsible for 40% of the work programme in one year, and for 20% in another year, this can be a sign that the Commission was focussing on fewer policy areas in the first year than in the second year.

The average percentage of attention devoted to the five most important policy areas in all work programmes is even higher with 67.13%, and the top three most important policy areas are responsible for an average of 50.05% of the work programmes. Because averages are always vulnerable for outliers, figure 4-1 reports the percentage of every work programme devoted to the five most important (or most discussed) policy fields. Looking at figure 4-1, it seems that the concentration of policy focus has been increasing and decreasing, but the five areas receiving the most attention take up at least 50% of all sentences in every work programme.

Figure 4-1: Top five policy areas in % of total work programme, 1995 - 2012



In 1995, for example, 55.59% of the work programme was related to one of the five most important policy areas (which were institutional operations, foreign relations, economic and financial/monetary affairs, social policy, and information society and media). Diversity in policy focus was lower after that, with the top five policy areas getting more than 60% of the work programmes devoted to them. These results do seem to show, however, that diversity in the number of different policy areas that get attention in the work programmes has become lower over time.

The observation that diversity in attention has decreased after 2002 could be explained by remarks made by the Commission in its work programme for 2002. In that work programme, the Commission states that “the conditions and the nature of the Commission Work Programme have therefore changed. (...) the Work Programme has now become a political instrument, (...)” (Commission of the European Communities, p. 1). It might therefore be possible that the Commission has moved away from a programme that is discussing all the topics that are subject of the work of the Commission towards a more politicised programme that merely outlines the real priorities the Commission wants to get done. If, and to what extent, this has indeed happened is a matter for a different study, however.

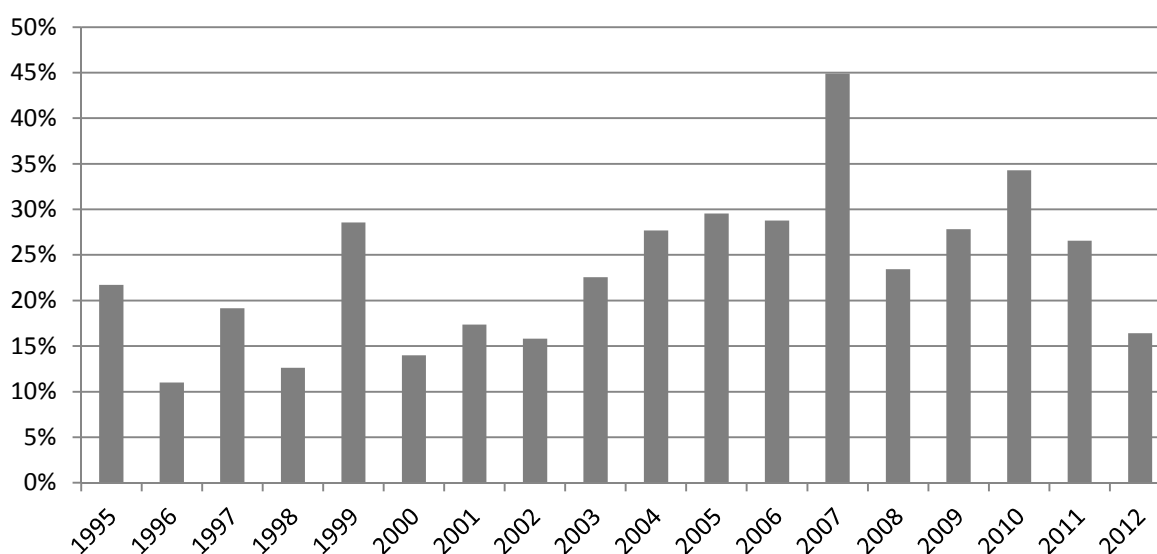
Another way of gauging diversity in policy focus is by examining whether or not there are differences in policy areas in the top three or top five from year to year. Doing this shows that the top three policy areas (in terms of policy areas receiving the most attention) is relatively stable: institutional operations is present in the top three in all work programmes studied, except for the programme for 1996; economic and financial/monetary affairs is in the top three in 14 of the 18 work programmes studied (if fell out of the top three in 1997, 2001, 2005, and 2007); and the attention for foreign relations ranks in the top three in 11 of the 18 work programmes (with 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2011 being the exception). Even in the years where one of these policy fields is

not in the top three, they are still present in the top five of most important policy areas (with the exception of economic and financial affairs in 2007, where it dropped out of the top five).

4.2.2 Attention for institutional operations

Although no hypothesis or expectations regarding the field of institutional operations have been formulated, the results of the analysis warrant a separate discussion of the trends in the amount of attention that the Commission gives to this specific policy area. There is one simple reason for this: the field of institutional operations receives the most attention in the majority of the work programmes. There are only four work programmes (for 1996, 1998, 2002 and 2012) in which a different policy area receives more attention than institutional operations. Even in the work programmes for those years, however, institutional operations is the area that gets the second (1998, 2002, 2012) or third (1996) most attention. In general, however, it may be said that the category of institutional operations has always been at or near the top of the agenda of the Commission during the 1995 – 2012 period. This is difficult to explain through the expected influence of the largest party in the EP, because although institutional operations are among the five most important policy areas for the PES (1994) and EPP in 1999, the policy area receives (much) more attention from the Commission than from the EP parties.

Figure 4-2: Attention for institutional operations, 1994 – 2012 (in % of total number of sentences)



What is interesting when studying the sentences that are coded in the institutional operations category is that most of those sentences are discussing the exact same issues in different work programmes. For example: in the work programme for 1996, the following sentence is found: “the Commission will continue its simplification efforts” (Commission of the European Communities, 1995). In later programmes, more or less the same sentence can be found. Take for example the work programme for 1998, which contains the sentence: “the changes in the Union’s policies will call for parallel changes in the methods of administration”; the work programme for 1999: “The Commission

must modernise (...) and simplify its management”; the work programme for 2002: “the Commission will continue to pursue its own internal reforms (...) and will review overall progress on reform and administrative simplification” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001b); and the work programme for 2008: “(...) an increasing number of simplification proposals to reduce administrative burdens” (European Commission, 2007). These are just a few examples, but many of the sentences that have been coded in the institutional operations category are related to reforming the ways in which the Commission works, or they are discussing simplification of legislation. These two issues seem to have been going on throughout the entire period studied. Other topics that are included in this category and that appear regularly are discussions of the budget of the European Union, and cooperation between the European Commission, European Parliament, and the European Council.

When looking at figure 4-2, there is another interesting case: the work programme for 2007 has a strikingly high level of attention for institutional operations with 44.89%, even when it is taken into consideration that this policy area receives most of the attention in almost every work programme. Looking at the circumstances that could have caused this, there are two separate events that might possibly explain this peak: the failed ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in 2004 which eventually caused the Member States to renegotiate and finally create the Lisbon Treaty at the end of 2007, and the enlargement process that was finalized in 2007. To what extent these two events may be responsible for the spike in attention for institutional operations is hard to say, and their significance probably should not be overstated: the events leading up to the Lisbon Treaty were already set in motion in 2005, when the Constitutional Treaty was rejected by Dutch and French voters, which forced the EU governments to reconsider and in the end create the Lisbon Treaty. With regards to the enlargement process, it should be noted that the 2007 enlargement was not the largest in recent history and, in fact, the Commission does not consider it to be a separate event (European Commission). According to the Commission, the entry into the EU by Romania and Bulgaria was the conclusion to the enlargement wave that started in 2004, when ten other Eastern European Countries entered the EU.

When a closer look is taken at the sentences that are coded in the institutional operations category in the work programme for 2007, a number of different reasons for the observed increase in attention can be identified. A large part of the sentences are discussing the EU’s Better Regulation programme, which is aimed at better application of regulation tools, closer cooperation with Member States, and “reinforcing constructive dialogue between stakeholders and regulators” (European Commission, 2012a). Of the total number of 101 sentences, 26 are directly concerned with the Better Regulation programme.

For both events, therefore, their impact is unknown and could be rather small, since the events that led up to the Lisbon Treaty as well as the 2007 enlargement already started in 2004. The fact that the work programme 2007 shows a remarkable high level of attention for institutional operations, however, still remains.

In order to see if political positioning of the Commission and the EP may be helpful in explaining the levels of attention, the correlation between these variables have been correlated. The results can be seen in table 4-4.

Table 4-4: Correlations for institutional operations

		Left-right position: European Parliament, largest party	Left-right: European Commission
Institutional operations	Pearson's R	,497	,616
	P-value (two-tailed)	,036	,006
	N	18	18

The correlations reported in table 4-4 show that there is a significant and positive correlation between the political position of both political actors and the amount of attention for institutional operations. This might indicate that, based on right wing or (neo-) liberal ideas that there should be less regulation, the move towards the right of both actors have caused an increase in attention for institutional operations. It must be stressed, however, that these numbers do not prove that there is a causal relationship between the two; they merely show that during the period of this study, an increase in attention for institutional operations is accompanied by a move to the right of both political actors, and vice versa.

One final remark that could be made about this category is related to the work programme for 2002. As said earlier in this chapter, the Commission wrote that “*the Work Programme has now become a political instrument, integrated in the new cycle (...)*”. Comparing the 2002 work programme (and the programmes after that) to the programmes for the years before does not show a clear difference in the contents of the programmes, except for the earlier described decline in diversity of policy attention.

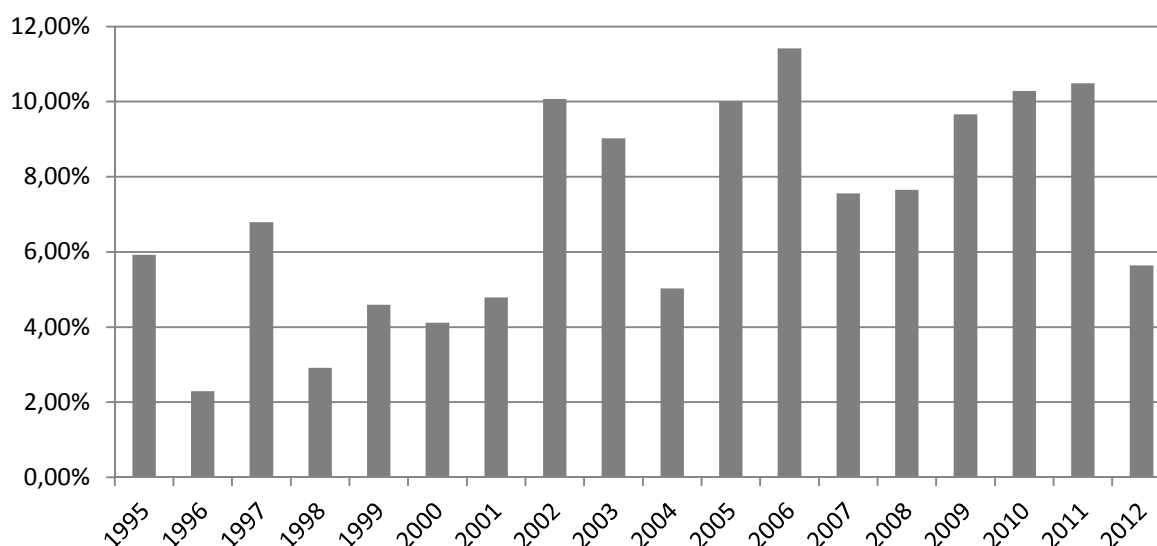
4.2.3 Justice and home affairs

As said earlier, there are a number of reasons to discuss the policy area of justice and home affairs by itself. First of all, based on the found policy priorities of the largest EP parties, it was expected that an increase would occur after 1999. Secondly, the different terrorist attacks on New York, London, and Madrid in the early 2000s are also expected to have an effect on the level of attention for justice and home affairs.

A significant increase does seem to occur after 2001 (the P-value resulting from a t-test is smaller than 0.001, which is significant with an α of 5%). A likely explanation for this increase is, of course, the terrorist attack on New York in September 2001. In 2004, this increase in attention seems to dissipate again, but another jump in attention for justice and home affairs is observed in 2005 and 2006. The drop in attention might be explained by a possible sense of renewed security after the 9/11

attacks, while a possible explanation for the increase from 2005 onwards (the amount of attention never drops back down to the levels seen in the years up to 2001) could be the terrorist attacks on Madrid (in 2004) and London (in 2005). The work programme for 2012 does show a large drop-off in attention for justice and home affairs, but it is not very clear which events caused this decrease, and it is also not clear whether or not this is the start of a new trend with decreasing attention for justice and home affairs, or that this is just a one-time occurrence.

Figure 4-3: Attention for justice and home affairs, 1994 – 2012 (in % of total number of sentences)



Based on the earlier discussion of the political move towards the right of both the Commission and the largest party in the EP, an increase in attention for justice and home affairs is expected because of the move towards the right of the political spectrum observed both in the Commission and in the party that holds the most seats in the EP and based on the policy priorities of the largest EP party. In order to see if these two variables are correlated, Pearson's R has been calculated. The results from these calculations can be found in table 4-5.

Table 4-5: Correlations for justice and home affairs (Pearson's R)

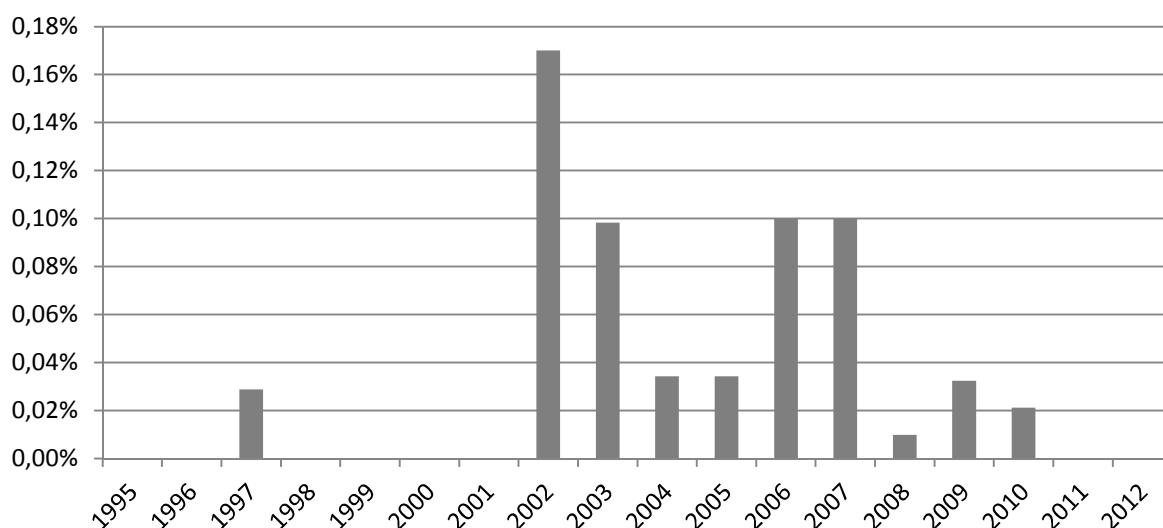
		Left-right: European Parliament, largest party	Left-right: European Commission
Justice and home affairs	Pearson's R	.508	.552
	P-value (two-tailed)	.033	.018
	N	18	18

The values for Pearson's R for the correlation between attention for justice and home affairs and the left-right position of the EP and the Commission show that there is indeed a significant, positive correlation between both sets of variables. When the largest party in the European Parliament moves more to the right, attention for justice and home affairs also increases. And once again it has to be

stated that it is not claimed that one causes the other, it is merely concluded that both variables move in the same direction at the same time.

Of course, one explanation for this correlation (or co-variation) could be that after the different terrorist attacks in the first half of the 2000's, the Commission decided that it should devote more attention to justice and home affairs to prevent these attacks, while at the same time voters in Europe started voting for parties that were proposing measures to combat terrorism (which could be expected to be parties on the right of the political scale). In order to check whether or not these terrorist attacks have caused the Commission to pay more attention to security issues and combatting terrorism, all work programmes have been analysed for the presence of the word terrorism (or variations on that word)¹³. This analysis produced the results that are presented in figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4: Terror* mentioned in work programmes 1995 - 2012 (in % of total number of words)



Looking at these results, they show that terrorism was not an issue that was of importance to the Commission (or at least not important enough to directly discuss it). In the seven work programmes from 1995 until 2001, only one instance of the term terror* is found (in the work programme for 1997). In the years after 2001, terrorism (or a variation on that word) is found at least once in every work programme for the period 2002 – 2010. Most of the increases in attention for justice and home affairs also occur during that same timespan.

¹³ This is done by importing all work programmes into the Yoshikoder content analysis software, which is then used to check for terms containing the phrase “terror*”. By doing this, this analysis includes all words starting with terror, such as terrorism, terrorist, etc. The results are reported in percentages of the total number of words in the work programme, which means that these percentages will be very small, because, as Lowe (2006, p. 3) notes, about half of all words in a text are “*contentless grammatical function words*”, which leaves the other half of all words for the entire actual content.

Table 4-6: Correlation for justice and home affairs and terror*

		Terror*
Justice and home affairs	Pearson's R	.558
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.016
	N	18

As can be seen in table 4-6, level of attention for justice and home affairs and the number of times the term terror* is found are positively (and significantly) correlated. In other words: whenever the attention for justice and home affairs increases, the number of times that terms like terrorism, terrorist, etc. are used increases as well (and vice versa). In 2002, a sudden increase in the number of terms found is observed: analysis show 12 instances of terms found with terror*, which is 0.17% of the total work programme. Besides these quantitative results, there are also qualitative indicators that the terrorist attacks on New York in 2001 are at least partially responsible for the increase in attention for justice and home affairs. In the 2002 work programme, 9 sentences refer directly to those attacks, and when sentences discussing combatting terrorism more generally are also included, there are 16 sentences (out of total 28 sentences related to the events of 9/11. Examples of direct references to the events in New York are: "The Commission responded swiftly to the events of 11 September (...), including through proposals to combat terrorism (...)" ; "the events of 11 September were clearly the defining moment of 2001"; and "The European Union has acted with speed and determination following the events of 11 September" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001b, pp. 4, 7, 9)

Combining these quantitative and qualitative results, it therefore seems safe to say that the terrorist attacks of September 2001 have (at least partially) caused the increase in attention for the justice and home affairs category.

The proportion of the term terror* drops to 0.10% in the work programme for 2003 and then returns to very low levels in 2004 and 2005. The attention for justice and home affairs in 2005, however, increases, although no significant attention for terrorism is found. The increase in attention is therefore likely to be caused by different events. Looking at the sentences that are coded in the category for justice and home affairs does not show a clear cause that can explain this increase in attention. Much of the sentences are discussing the coordination of asylum and migration policies, and cooperating and coordinating in border control. These are issues that are discussed in other work programmes as well, however, and it is therefore hard to argue that these have caused an increase in 2005 but not in other years.

The only event that can be identified as possibly causing the increase in the work programme for 2005 is the adoption of the Hague Programme. This programme was adopted by the Council in November 2004 and was meant to strengthen the so-called area of freedom, security and justice (European Commission, 2009). Two of the sentences coded in the justice and home affairs category

refer to this programme, and it is possible that this programme was the impetus for the Commission to pay more attention to matters relating to the area of freedom, security and justice.

The work programme for 2006 shows an increased focus on justice and home affairs, and actually has the highest level of attention for that policy field of all work programmes studied (with 11,42%). This is mainly caused by the terrorist bombings in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005. Twelve sentences (on a total of 25 sentences coded in the justice and home affairs category) discuss these bombings directly or indirectly. These results are, similar to the work programme for 2002, supported by the number of terms related to terrorism found through computerised content analysis. Although the increase in numbers of terms found is not as dramatic as was the case in 2002, there is still a remarkable increase from the number of terms found in 2005 and in 2006 (and 2007 as well). Twenty terms are found in the work programme for 2006, resulting in a percentage of the work programme of 0.10%.

Combining the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the 2006 work programme produces the same results as the analysis of the 2002 work programme: the terrorist attacks on London and Madrid are likely to have at least contributed to an increase in attention for justice and home affairs. What is interesting, however, is that this increase only occurred after the second set of bombings in London in 2005: where the 9/11 attacks seem to have caused increased attention in the next year (2002), attention for justice and home affairs did not immediately increase after the Madrid bombings, for some reason. Whatever the reason was for this delay in increasing attention, and why the Commission picked up its focus on justice and home affairs only after the London bombings, is an interesting subject. Of course, there could also be entirely different reasons for these changes in 2005 and 2006 that cannot be determined in this study. This could be a subject for a different study, however.

A final increase in attention for the area of justice and home affairs is observed in 2010, and 2011. This is not caused by the consequences of terrorist attacks or threats, since the number of times that terrorism or related terms are found is almost non-existent. It seems to be mostly related to the adoption and implementation of the Stockholm Programme, with 10 sentences (on a total of 15 sentences coded in the justice and home affairs category for the 2011 work programme) referring to the Stockholm Programme, for example.

4.2.4 Economic and financial affairs

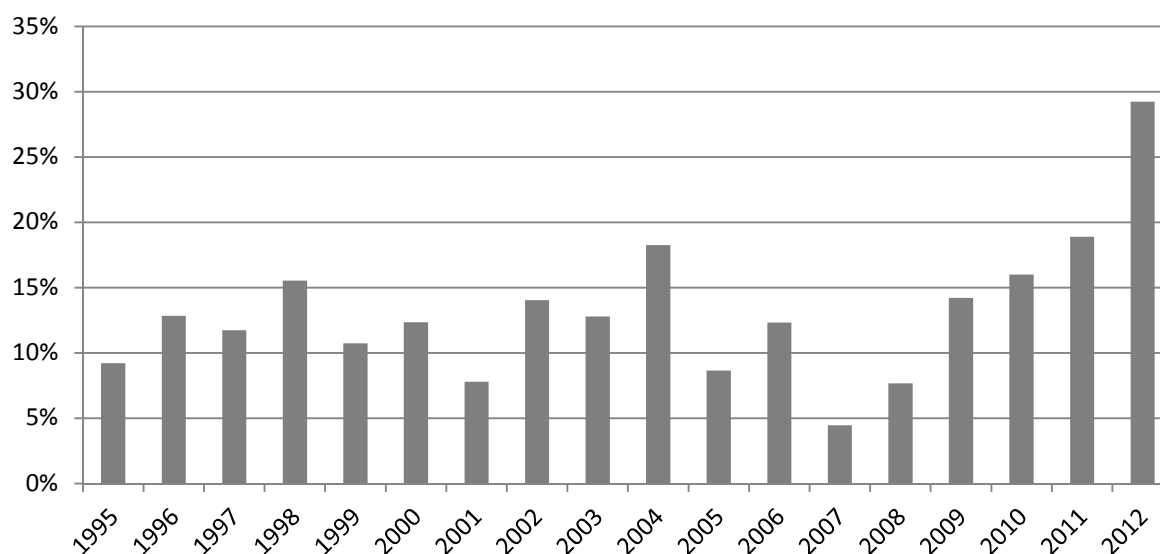
Based on the general hypotheses in chapter two, and the findings about political positioning and policy priorities, it is expected that an increase of attention for economic and financial affairs would be observed in 2004 (because of policy priorities, and because of the move towards the right by both political actors), and after the first economic crisis in 2008.

From the results presented in figure 4-5, the amount of attention dedicated to economic and financial/monetary affairs seems to be rather balanced around the average of 13.14% of sentences in the work programmes devoted to economic and financial policies. There are a number years, however,

that show a significant difference from that average: in 2001, only 7.78% of sentences in the work programme discussed economic and financial policies, and in 2007 this was only 4.44%. The t-test result for 2001 gives a p-value of 0.001, and for 2007 the t-test results in a value of $p < 0.001$. Both these work programmes therefore appear to be deviating significantly from the average amount of attention paid to economic and financial policies.

Explanations for these two dips in attention are very hard to find, because the Commission is more likely to explain why they are devoting attention to a certain policy area, instead of explaining all the areas they are giving less attention to. The fact that 2001 shows such a low level of attention for economic policy is furthermore puzzling, because one would expect that the introduction of the Euro on January 1st 2002 would have led to an increase in attention for economic, financial and monetary policy because of all the necessary preparations. It could of course be possible that the increase that is expected because of the introduction of the euro already took place in the years before 2001, which could mean that the Commission does not need to devote even more attention to the policy area in 2001 compared to earlier years. Looking at the contents of the work programmes for the years leading up to 2002, this does indeed seem to be the case.

Figure 4-5: Attention for economic and financial affairs, 1994 – 2012 (in % of total number of sentences)



The work programme for 1998, for example, shows an increase (albeit not significantly different from the average) in attention for the policy area of economic and financial affairs compared to the years before and after 1998. A closer look at the contents of all sentences coded into this category shows that 16 of the total 32 sentences are mentioning the (introduction of the) Euro and/or the process towards European Monetary Union (EMU). The fact that 50% of the total attention for economic and financial affairs is aimed at the Euro and EMU might be caused by two upcoming events: in 1998, the decision on which countries would be participating in the “initial transition to the Euro” was to be taken in 1998 (Commission of the European Communities, 1997, p. 2) and the final

preparations for the introduction of stage III of EMU were to be made in order to have all preparations finalized when this stage was to be introduced in January 1999 (Commission of the European Communities, 1997, p. 4).

One increase in attention that can be discussed is the increase in 2004. This is also a significant increase compared to the average amount of attention for economic and financial policies (the t-test results in $p=0.001$) which could be attributed to the start of the fifth wave of enlargement with 10 (and eventually an additional 2 in 2007) new Member States. This enlargement may have led to more attention for the cohesion and structural policies in order to reduce the economic gap between the old and new Member States.

Although that might be a reasonable expectation, this theory does not hold when looking at the contents of the sentences themselves. On the contrary: enlargement is not mentioned in any sentence coded into the category for economic and financial/monetary affairs, which means that enlargement is not a cause for the increase observed in 2004 in any way. The event (if it can be labelled as such) mentioned most often in the work programme for 2004 is the “weak economic performance” of the EU in 2003, which had to be dealt with in 2004 (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p. 5). Of the total 29 sentences coded into the economic and financial affairs category, 11 are discussing this weak economic performance, or ways in which it will be improved upon in 2004.

In the period from 2004 up to 2007, attention for the area of economic and financial affairs remains around the average level of attention. After the lowest point in attention is reached in 2007 (only 4.44% of the work programme), the work programmes show a steady increase in attention for economic and financial policies, culminating in the highest level of attention found in this study in the work programme for 2012 (28.87%), which is also significant with $p<0.001$ (the t-test for the 2011 work programme results in the same value; 2010 results in $p=0.041$).

This continuing increase could be caused by the ongoing economic and financial crisis that, in 2012, started to become a realistic threat to the Euro, for example. The developments in the economic crisis may have forced the Commission to start paying more and more attention to economic issues concerning the crisis (such as the Stability and Growth Pact, the European Financial Stability Facility, etc.). The contents of the work programmes seem to support this expectation: the work programme for 2010 refers to the financial crisis and economic slowdown (or describes measures to be taken in order to prevent such a crisis from happening again) in 14 of the 28 sentences that are coded in the category for economic and financial affairs; in the work programme for 2011, 12 of the 27 sentences coded in that category are referring to the economic crisis and the slow economic recovery from that crisis; and the 2012 work programme shows that 31 of the 56 sentences coded into this category refer to the economic and financial crisis.

When the sentences that refer to the economic and financial crisis are taken out of the results of the coding, the percentages of the work programmes obviously drop significantly to levels around or below the average for all work programmes: without these sentences, economic and financial affairs

receives 8.69% of the work programme for 2010, 11.45% for 2011, and 15.34% for 2012. This shows that (*ceteris paribus*) the level of attention for this policy field would be much lower if the economic and financial crises had not occurred. Even in that situation, however, a steady increase in attention is observed. The reason for this is hard to explain, even when looking at the contents of the work programmes. One possible event related to the increase is the Europe 2020 strategy, which is the successor of the Lisbon strategy for Growth and Jobs (European Commission, 2012c). This new strategy was formally adopted by the Council in June 2010, and as such it may have caused an increase in attention to economic and/or financial issues related to it. Even though (because of the time of its adoption) it cannot explain the increase in 2010, it may have caused the increases observed in 2011 and 2012.

In the programme for 2011, the Europe 2020 strategy is referred to directly in 5 sentences coded in the category for economic and financial affairs (on a total of 27). When the sentences that are concerned with the strategy, but do not refer to it directly, are also included, the total number of sentences that are about the Europe 2020 strategy becomes 12, almost half the total sentences for economic and financial affairs.

What does become clear, however, is that attention for economic and financial policy area does not see a significant increase after the first economic crisis hit in 2008: although there is an increase in attention in 2009, compared to 2008 and 2007, the amount of attention in 2009 is not significantly different from the average ($p=0.426$). The exact reason for this ‘lag’ in reacting to the economic crises unfortunately lays beyond the scope of this thesis (although it may be that the Commission thought that the problems could be solved without its help, and it only started to act in 2010, when it possibly became clear that it indeed had a role to play).

As was the case for justice and home affairs, an expectation that attention for economic policy would increase from 1999 onwards (covarying with the movement towards the right in both the Commission and the EP) was based on the hypotheses formulated in chapter two of this thesis. And again Pearson’s R has been calculated in order to determine the correlation between the amount of attention for economic and financial/monetary affairs and the left-right position of the Commission and the EP has been calculated. These results can be found in table 4-7.

Table 4-7: Correlations for economic and monetary/financial affairs (Pearson’s R)

		Left-right: European Parliament, largest party	Left-right: European Commission
Economic and financial/monetary affairs	Pearson’s R	.026	.318
	P-value (two-tailed)	.918	.198
	N	18	18

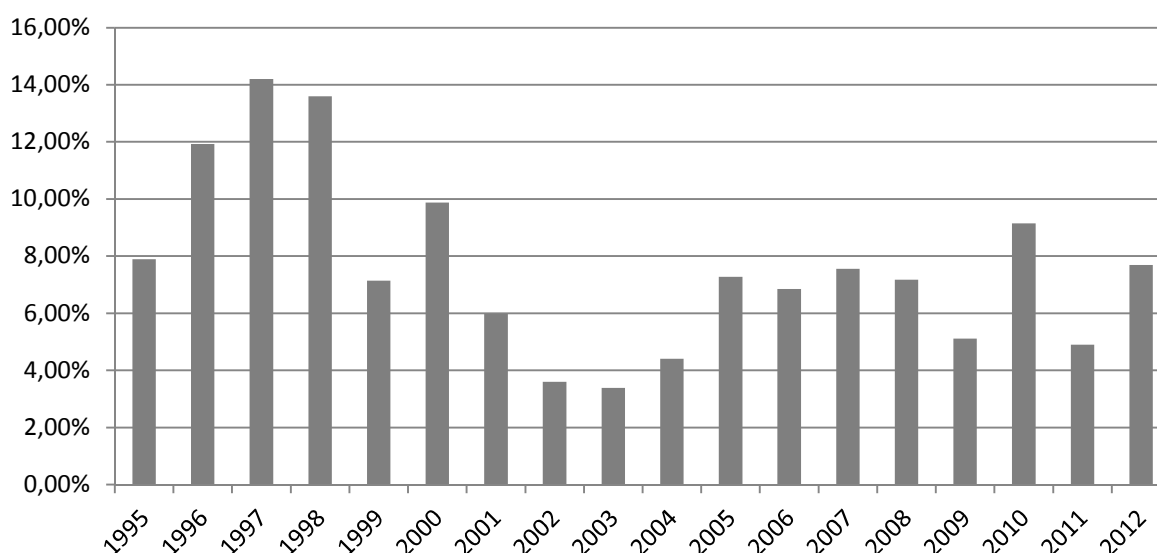
What becomes clear from these figures is that there is no significant correlation between the attention for economic and financial affairs and the left-right positioning of the EP and the Commission. In other words: it cannot be concluded from these numbers that left-right positioning of the Parliament and/or the Commission co-vary with the amount of attention for economic and financial affairs, let alone claim that there is a (causal) relation between these two variables¹⁴.

4.2.5 Attention for social policy

As was discussed in chapter 2, it seems as if social policy garnered much attention in the late 1990s, and possibly the early 2000s, but that attention appears to have dissolved in more recent years. Looking at the findings of the content analysis, it can be said that this change is also visible in the work programmes of the Commission. As figure 4-6 shows, attention for social policy seems to be highest in the late 1990s, with 1996, 1997 and 1998 marking the highest levels of attention. All these years are significantly ($P < 0,001$) higher than the average level of attention for social policy, which lies at 7.65% of sentences in work programmes dedicated to social policy.

In the years after 1998, attention for social policy drops: in 1996, 1997 and 1998, the Commission devoted respectively 11.93%; 14.20% and 13.59% to social policy. In the years after 1998, these numbers are never reached again, and no work programme contains more than 9.14% of sentences about social policy in the period 1999 - 2012. Attention for this policy area was lowest in 2002 and 2003, with 3.60% and 3.38% (and 2004 did not show a large difference with 4.40%; all these years are significantly lower than the average with $p < 0.001$, as was 2001 with $p = 0.038$). Significant low amounts of attention are also observed in 2009 and 2011 with p-values of 0.003 and 0.002.

Figure 4-6: Attention for social policy, 1994 – 2012 (in % of total number of sentences)



¹⁴ It should be taken into consideration, however, that the left-right indication of the CHES data is a general measure of left-right positioning that not only includes economic policy, but also other issues such as immigration and social policies, for example. The CHES data also include a more specific left-right score for economic policy, but due to limited time it was not possible to include these in the current study.

The peaks observed at the end of the 1990s may have several causes: the Amsterdam Treaty, signed in 1997, may have caused the increase in 1998 (and possibly 1997), and the level of attention in 1996 and 1997 might very well be caused by the continued efforts of the Commission in furthering social policy that already started in the 1980s during the Delors Commission (as is discussed in chapter 2), and possibly by the large number of leftist governments in office in the Member States.

Looking qualitatively at the contents of the sentences coded into the social policy category, several reasons for the high amount of attention for social policy can be identified in the work programmes for 1996 until 1998. The Commission cites high level of employment, and its 1995 report on unemployment, as important issues that should be solved in the work programme for 1996 (it even listed unemployment as the number one priority for 1996 (Commission of the European Communities, 1995, p. 1): 14 of the total of 24 sentences coded in the social policy category refer either to unemployment as a problem, or to solutions to the problem of unemployment. The work programme for 1997 again mentions (un)employment in many sentences coded in the social policy category, and it includes the Employment pact that was accepted by the Council in December 1996. Of the total 23 sentences, 7 sentences mention the Employment pact directly, while 12 sentences are concerned with unemployment in general (including preparations for the European Council on Employment that was to be held in Luxemburg in November 1997). So, similar to the work programme for 1996, high levels of unemployment and a focus on reforming employment systems in the member states seems to be the main reason for the high amount of attention for social policy in 1997.

In the work programme for 1998, unemployment is again the main reason for the high level of attention. Unlike the programmes for the previous two years, however, the 1998 programme refers to three tangible events that might be (partially) responsible for the high level of attention: the consequences of the European Council on employment in Luxemburg in 1997 (2 sentences); the Amsterdam meeting of the European Council; and the Amsterdam Treaty, even though it had not been ratified at the time (6 sentences). The Commission even states that: “the employment title of the Amsterdam Treaty will be actively implemented ahead of the Treaty’s ratification” (Commission of the European Communities, 1997, p. 1). When the number of sentences referring to this two events directly are combined with the sentences about unemployment (so the same type of sentence is included as for the 1996 and 1997 work programmes), the total number of sentences discussing the issue of unemployment is 17 (on a total of 28 sentences on social policy). In other words: (the battling of) unemployment is responsible for more than half of all sentences coded into the social policy category for the work programmes of 1996, 1997, and 1998, but the programme for 1998 is the first that mentions political events (Amsterdam Council, Amsterdam Treaty), whereas the programmes for 1996 and 1997 discuss the more intangible subject of ‘high unemployment’.

In 2000, a new spike in attention for social policy is observed. This increase seems to be caused by the presentation of a new Social Action Programme that was planned for 2000. Of the total of 24 sentences, 12 sentences refer directly or indirectly to this new action programme (and most of those

sentences are, again, about unemployment). The final spike in attention that deserves discussion is the one observed in the work programme for 2010. This is, again, mainly caused by concerns for unemployment, but this time there is also a reference to an event that has caused that unemployment (unlike the programmes in the late 1990s, where unemployment is discussed more as a problem by itself): “in the current economic situation, employment and social impacts are particularly important” (European Commission, 2010, p. 10).

As has been described in chapter 2 of this thesis, there are also three other measurable variables that may influence the amount of attention that the Commission devotes to social policy: political (left-right) positioning of the European Commission as a whole; the political (left-right) position of the Commission member responsible for social policy; and the left-right position of the largest party in the European Parliament. To see in how far these variables might indeed be correlated, Pearson’s R has been calculated, and its results can be found in table 4-8.

One remark that should be kept in mind when interpreting table 4-8: the left-right position of political actors is based on a ten-point scale, on which a lower number means that said actor has a position more to the left of the political spectrum, and a higher number means an actor is more to the right. That also means that, when the hypotheses set out in chapter two are found to be true, the correlation between political position and attention for social policy should be negative. For example: when the position of the Commission moves more to the right (as it has done), the value for its political position increases. Because it is expected that this will lead to a lower level of attention for social policy, the correlation is expected to be negative: a higher score on left-right positioning would lead to a lower level of attention for social policy.

Table 4-8: Correlations for social policy (Pearson’s R)

		Left-right: European Parliament, largest party	Left-right: European Commission	Left-right: Commission member for social policy
Social policy	Pearson’s R	-.741	-.311	.643
	P-value (two-tailed)	.000	.209	.004
	N	18	18	18

As can be seen in table 4-8, there is no significant correlation between the attention for social policy by the Commission and the political position of the Commission as a whole. The correlation between the left-right position of the largest party in the EP and the attention for social policy, on the other hand, does appear to be significant. Whenever the amount of attention for social policy in the work programmes increases, the value for left-right positioning of the largest party in the EP decreases (i.e.: moves more to the left of the political spectrum). This also works the other way around, of course: whenever the score of the largest party in the EP increases (i.e.: it moves more to the right), the amount of attention for social policy seems to decline. Note, however, that there is no claim of

causation between the two variables: the numbers represented here merely show the correlation between the different variables.

There is also a significant, but positive, correlation between the political position of the Commissioner responsible for social policy and the level of attention for his work field. This means that whenever the score for political positioning of the Commissioner decreases (i.e.: he or she moves to the left of the political spectrum), the attention for social policy decreases. Again, this would also be applicable the other way around: when the Commissioner moves to the right of the political spectrum, attention for social policy would increase. And again it should be noted that this is no measure of causation: this number merely means that a move towards the left by the Commissioner (as is observed in this study) leads to less attention for social policy. When looking at the theory, these results seem rather strange: it would be expected that a Commissioner that is positioned on the left would devote more attention to social policy (which would lead to a negative correlation, not a positive one). It might be explained, however, by the fact that the Commission decides by absolute majority, leaving little room for an individual Commissioner to influence decisions (as has been stated in chapter 2). This would mean that the shift towards the right of the Commission as a whole outweighs the movement towards the left of the Commissioner responsible for social policy. This would be a matter for a different study on decision making within the Commission itself, however.

A significant difference between the Prodi and Santer Commissions on the one hand and the Barroso Commissions on the other hand, with regard to focus on social policy, is not found in the data from this study. This means that no evidence is found that the Prodi and Santer Commission, during their entire period in office, paid more (or less) attention to social policy than the Barroso Commissions that followed them. Looking at different years, as is done earlier in this discussion, shows that there are differences from year to year, but these cannot be generalized to the entire period of a Commission.

5 Conclusion

The starting point of this thesis was the question “*how has the agenda of the European Commission change from 1995 – 2012 and how can the changes be explained*”. In order to eventually come to an answer to this question, this chapter will start with a short discussion and answer for the sub questions formulated in chapter two. Related to those questions, several hypotheses had been formulated, two of which were depending on the results of the study of political positioning of the European Commission and the largest party in the EP. It is very important to keep in mind that these conclusions are not arguing that there are causal relations between different variables. They are mostly descriptions of changes in policy focus by the Commission, changes in political positioning of political actors, and, in some cases, tentative indications of possible causal relations between events that are mentioned in the work programmes (terrorist attacks, for example) and changes in the level of attention for related policy areas.

The left-right positioning of the European Commission throughout the years has been determined by using data from expert surveys. The position for every individual Commissioner that was a member at the start of that Commission’s term has been determined (by looking up the score for their national political party), after which the average of all scores was calculated. This shows that the Commission has moved towards the right side of the political spectrum after the Prodi Commission left office in 2004: the first two Commissions examined for this study, the Santer and Prodi Commissions, were situated a little to the left of the political middle. Both Barroso Commissions that came into office after 2004 had political positions on the right of the political middle. An interesting note to these results is that the score for the Commissioner responsible for social policy has been moving in the opposite direction: in the Santer Commission, this Commission member was on the right of the political middle, contrary to the average political position of the Commission. The member of the second Barroso Commission tasked with social policy has a position on the left of the political middle, while the Commission on average had moved to the right.

The results for the political position of the largest party in the European Parliament show more or less the same shift from the left to the right: the PES won the elections in 1994, with a position on the left of the political middle, and more to the left of the Commission; from the 1999 elections onwards, the EPP has been the largest party, with a position on the right side of the political middle (and that position does not change very much throughout the years). Finally, the policy areas that are the most important areas for those parties were also studied, which showed that justice and home affairs became very important from the 1999 election on, and economic policy became important for the EPP starting with the 2004 elections.

Based on hypotheses H1 and H2 (see chapter two), the moves towards the right from both the Commission and the largest EP party, and the policy priorities of the largest EP parties, led to the expectation that the Commission would be devoting more attention to right-wing policies (taxation,

justice and home affairs) and less to left-wing policies, such as social policy. Attention for social policy was furthermore expected to decline after 2000, based on literature from other scholars on the developments in this area (hypothesis H3). The last two hypotheses (H4 and H5) were related to two events that were expected to cause an increase in attention for the areas of economic policies and institutional operations, respectively.

Turning to the results from the content analysis of the work programmes, it might be interesting to start with something that has remained more or less the same: the attention for the area of institutional operations receives a lot of attention in all work programmes. In 14 work programmes, it is the most discussed policy field, in three others it is the second most discussed area, and in one programme it ends up as the third most important policy area. Although it was hypothesized that the scandal surrounding the Santer Commission in the late 1990s would have caused an increase in attention for this policy field (H5), the fact that the level of attention has staid high throughout the entire period studied does not support this hypothesis.

Explanations for the generally high level of attention for this policy area are not found in this study: there are no particular events that can explain this continuing high level of attention, and although a significant correlation between attention for institutional operations and the political positioning of the Commission and the largest party in the EP has been found, this correlation cannot be used to confidently conclude that political positioning caused the level of attention for institutional operations.

It might be that the issues discussed regarding this category, mainly simplification of legislation, have been important for the EU for a long time already, starting before the period studied for this thesis. This may have caused this policy area to become a more or less constant factor that has to be taken care of, without the Commission needing external impetus in order to increase its attention. This may also cause a situation in which the Commission cannot turn away from giving these amounts of attention to these issues, due to path dependency issues. Whether or not this is indeed the case might be the topic for a different study.

Another general conclusion about the changes in the Commission's agenda is that a small amount of policy areas are getting the most attention: on average, about 50% of a work programme is concerned with the three most important policy areas, a number that increases to about 67% for the top five of important policy areas. This means that the Commission tends to give most attention to a small number of policy areas, and divides the rest of the work programmes over the remaining policy areas. Furthermore, the policy fields in the top three remain more or less the same: as said earlier, institutional operations is always one of the three most important areas, and economic and financial/monetary affairs and foreign relations are present in the top three in the majority of the work programmes as well. Even in the years where these areas are not in the top three, they still remain in the top five of most discussed policy areas. This shows that even though the level of attention the

Commission devotes to a certain policy field may differ from year to year, there are areas that remain at or near the top of the agenda.

Coming back to the expected changes based on political positioning and policy priorities from the EP parties (H1 and H2), it is hard to give one clear answer to the question whether or not attention for right-wing policies has indeed increased, while attention for left-wing policies has decreased. With regard to the area of justice and home affairs, which can be considered to be a right-wing policy area and which has been the first or second most important policy area for the largest EP party ever since the EPP won the elections in 1999, it can be concluded that the level of attention from 2002 onwards is higher than in the years before 2002. This might be caused by the move towards the right by the Commission and the largest party in the EP, but this cannot be confidently concluded from the data of this study. What can be concluded, however, is that different terror attacks have contributed to an increase in attention: after the events in New York on September 9, 2001, attention for justice and home affairs increases significantly in 2002 and remains high in 2003. A similar course of events can be observed after the attacks on London and Madrid in 2004 and 2005, which have caused an increase in attention in the work programmes in 2005 and 2006. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Commission refers to these events in their work programmes, and by the positive and significant correlation between the use of terms such as terrorist, terrorism, etc. and the level of attention for justice and home affairs. Finally, a positive correlation between political positioning and attention for justice and home affairs has been found, showing that attention for this policy field increases when political actors move towards the right (and vice versa). Of course this only shows that these two variables covary or correlate, but it does not show that changes in political positioning cause an increase in attention.

Another expected change was an increase in attention for economic and financial/monetary affairs, due to the move towards the right of the political actors, and because of the economic crises that started in 2008 (H1, H2, and H4). The results from the content analysis do not show an increase (right) after a move towards the right by the Commission or EP parties, and no significant correlation between political position and attention for economic and financial policy can be found. It is therefore not possible to conclude that political positioning has had an effect on the amount of attention the Commission pays to economic and financial policies.

That conclusion does not imply that no change or increase is observed: although the amount of attention in most work programmes lays around the average for all work. A significant increase in attention is found in the work programme for 2004, and based on the contents of that work programme this might be caused by the weak economic situation within the EU at that time. Significant peaks in attention are again observed in 2010, 2011 and 2012, and examining the contents of the sentences coded in this category shows that these increases are caused by the economic and financial crises that first started in 2008. One other event that may have led to an increased level of attention for economic policy is the adoption in 2010 of the Europe 2020 strategy. It remains unclear, however, why that

particular strategy would cause increased attention, because it was basically the successor of the Lisbon Strategy, which had more or less the same goals.

In the end, this study shows that attention for economic and financial/monetary affairs is indeed influenced by events outside of the political sphere: the crises that occurred from 2008 onwards have clearly caused a higher level of attention for this policy area. Based on the results, it could even be argued (although with much caution), that the absence of a significant correlation between political positioning and attention for economic and financial/monetary affairs indicates that the amount of attention for this policy area is mostly determined by external events.

The final policy area that has been studied in more detail was that of social policy (H3). Expectations were that the amount of attention would increase at the end of the 1990s, and after that period of high attention levels it would drop to lower levels during the rest of the period of this study, because of the political movement towards the right (and less so because of the increased attention for other policy areas demanded by the economic crisis). The first expectation, that attention for social policy would be high at the end of the 1990s, can be supported with the results from this study: attention for social policy was never higher than in the period from 1996 – 1998, followed by another peak in the level of attention in 2000. The causes for these high levels of attention are identified (by the Commission in the work programmes themselves) as high levels of unemployment (which was described as the main reason for unemployment policies and the reform of employment systems in the work programme for 1996). The level of attention in 1997 could also be explained through the acceptance of the Employment pact by the Council in 1996. The high level of unemployment remains the main reason for the high level of attention in the work programme for 1998, although in that work programme the Commission mentions three events that happened and that have influenced the level of attention for social policy: the European Council on employment in Luxemburg, the Amsterdam Council meeting, and finally the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty (even when it had not been ratified at the time). The small jump in attention for social policy in 2000 can be explained by the presentation of a new Social Action Programme that was scheduled for 2000.

Another way of describing the change that occurred with the attention level for social policy is by looking at the place of social policy when all categories are ranked from the areas that receive the most attention to the one that receives the least. This shows that social policy is in the top 5 of most important policy areas from 1995 – 2000 (top 3 from 1996 – 1998), 2005 – 2008 (top three in 2007), 2010, and 2012. This might be interpreted as showing that, although in some years attention has indeed dropped, overall social policy is still receiving the same amount of attention (and thus these results may indicate that hypothesis three is not true). These numbers show that although social policy has remained on the agenda of the Commission, attention levels have indeed dropped after 2000, with some short-lived increases in the years after 2000.

The findings of this study in fact support the hypothesis (H3) that interest and attention for social policy died down after 2000, with one exception being the work programme for 2010. The amount of

attention for social policy shows a small peak again in 2010, which appeared to be mainly caused by concerns over unemployment (and “*social impacts*” caused by the economic and financial crisis), similar to the results of the work programmes at the end of the 1990s. It cannot be concluded, however, that the economic situation after 2008 have led to the decrease in attention for social policy in the late 2000s: the lowest amounts of attention for social policy are observed from 2002 – 2004, and attention remained around the average for the years after that, with 2010 being an exception with an increase, and 2009 and 2011 being exceptions by showing attention levels significantly lower than the average. Although it could be argued that these significantly low levels are results of other policy areas receiving more attention due to the economic crisis, this cannot be confidently concluded based on the data of this study: the Commission does not explain why there is less attention for social policy, and the fact that low levels of attention are found in years before the crisis may be an indication that social policy was receiving less attention already before the crisis hit.

It was also expected that this drop in attention for social policy could be caused by the political move towards the right of both political actors involved. The results of this study show no significant correlation between the position of the Commission and the attention for social policy. There is a significant correlation between the position of the largest party in the EP and the amount of attention for social policy: when the largest party moves towards the right, attention for social policy tends to decrease. In other words: it is reasonable to count out the left-right positioning of the Commission as a cause for changes in level of attention (because it is not even significantly correlated), but the position of the largest party in the EP might have an influence (although this cannot be concluded with certainty).

A final conclusion regarding the attention for social policy is that the political position of the individual Commission member responsible for social policy does not appear to be a factor in the level of attention for social policy from the entire Commission. On the contrary: this study shows attention for social policy decreased even when the Commissioner for social policy moved more towards the left of the political spectrum. This may be caused, of course, by the fact that the Commission decides by absolute majority: when the rest of the Commission is situated more on the right, an individual member of the Commission with a different position is likely to be outvoted by his or her peers.

Coming back to the main research question of this thesis, the first part of which has already been answered in the discussions above, the results from this study support the idea that external events have an influence on the agenda of the Commission. The most obvious case found in this study is the attention for justice and home affairs: it has been found that terrorist attacks have at least contributed significantly (and maybe even caused) increases in attention for justice and home affairs. Another area where (external) events are causing an increased level of attention is the field of economic and financial affairs. Attention for this policy category increases at the end of the 1990s because of the finalising of EMU and preparations for the introduction of the euro; and from 2010 onwards, the economic and financial crisis seems to be causing another increase in attention (although it might be

interesting to study why there is this difference between the start of the crisis in 2008 and the first observed increase in attention with sentences containing references to the crisis in 2010). There are, however, still areas where changes cannot be explained through either left-right positioning of political actors or external events: attention for energy policy, for example, shows an increase in 2007 and 2009. The increase in 2009 could be explained through the security problems in Georgia in 2008, although the Commission does not refer to those issues directly. The 2007 increase cannot be explained at all: it may be caused by the fact that energy prices kept rising, but it is then unclear why the Commission devotes more attention in 2007, and not in earlier or later years.

In general, if a short answer to the original research question should be given, it would be this: it can be said that attention for individual policy areas has been changing from year to year, and most of these changes that are found seem to be caused by external events, such as economic crises or terrorist attacks. Political positioning is found to be covarying with the attention for certain policy areas, but whether or not there is a causal relationship between the two, and the direction of this relationship, cannot be determined with the data gathered.

5.2 Limitations

There are two main limitations within this study and thesis. The first of those limitations is the fact that the coding scheme that has been devised only measures the general attention level for a policy area, without taking into account the type of attention. For example: a sentence discussing measures to cut taxes will be coded into the same category as a sentence discussing the increase of taxes. This makes it more difficult to assess the contents of all sentences coded into a category. Such an assessment is furthermore complicated by the fact that some coding categories are formulated rather broad. This problem could be solved by introducing several sub-categories, similar to the codebook of the Policy Agendas Project. If this would be done, however, researchers should be careful to not include too many sub-categories, since that would create a risk of getting to many categories that have very few sentences, making it harder to draw valid conclusions.

The second limitation of the current study is the fact that causality is very hard, if not impossible, to establish with the methodology and documents used (and consequently with the results from the study). Without the use of some sort of control group, it is very hard to determine if certain events are causally related. The conclusions of this study, therefore, are limited to finding correlations (but not causations) and connecting (political or other) events mentioned in the work programmes to changes in the amount of attention for categories related to those events. The relation between those events and the results from the coding process, however, cannot be statistically examined, which causes a lack of hard statistical evidence to support the conclusions.

Another limitation, although likely of less importance than the first three limitations discussed, is the methods used to determine the policy areas that are important for the largest parties in the European Parliament. The coding of manifestos and election programmes is a useful way of

determining which issues are important for a political party, but in an ideal situation this should also be done with the same units of analysis as those that are used for the main body of documents. In the case of this research this means that the party programmes would also have been coded per sentence, instead of per page. Due to time constraints, this has not been done in the current study, and although it is not likely that doing this analysis per sentence would have a significant influence on the final conclusions, future researchers might take this into consideration. Another option to determining policy priorities might be using the data of the Euromanifestos project, although one has to keep in mind that the policy areas listed in those studies do not correspond directly with the policy categories from the coding scheme that was designed for this study.

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Annex A: Special legislative procedures

(As in: Nugent, 2010, pp. 308-309)

I Ad hoc procedures

- 1 Annual budget – joint decision of EP and Council

II European Parliament acts

- 2 Statute for Members of the European Parliament. (Adoption by EP after obtaining consent of Council and after consulting Commission.)
- 3 Provisions governing the exercise of the right of enquiry. (Adoption by EP after obtaining consent of Council and Commission.)
- 4 Statute of European Ombudsman. (Adoption by EP after obtaining consent of Council and Commission.)

III Council Acts

A Unanimity and consent of European Parliament

- 5 Measures to combat discrimination.
- 6 Extension of citizenship-related rights. (National ratifications also required.)
- 7 European Public Prosecutor's Office.
- 8 Uniform electoral procedure. (On initiative from and after consent of EP. National ratification also required.)
- 9 Multiannual financial frameworks.

B Unanimity and consultation of European Parliament

- 10 Accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. (Council decision on a proposal from the negotiator of the agreement [in principle the Commission], with consent of EP.)
- 11 Measures concerning social security or social protection
- 12 Citizenship: right to vote and stand for election in member state of residence in municipal and European elections
- 13 Adoption of measures that constitute a step backwards in Union law as regards the liberalisation of movement of capital to or from third countries
- 14 Measures concerning passports, identity cards and residence permits.
- 15 Judicial cooperation in civil matters concerning measures relating to family law with cross-border implications. *
- 16 Operational police cooperation.
- 17 Interventions by the authority of a member state on the territory of another member state.
- 18 Harmonisation of turnover taxes and indirect taxation.
- 19 Approximation of provisions with a direct impact on the internal market.
- 20 Language arrangements for European intellectual property rights.

- 21 Replacing the Protocols on the excessive deficit procedure.
- 22 Specific tasks of European Central Bank concerning prudential supervision
- 23 Social policy: social security and social protection of workers, protection of workers where their employment contract is terminated, representation and collective defence, conditions of employment for third-country nationals. **
- 24 Environment: provisions of a fiscal nature, town and country planning, management of water resources, land use and the supply and diversification of energy resources.
- 25 Energy: fiscal measures.
- 26 Association of overseas countries and territories with the Union – rules and procedure.
- 27 Jurisdiction of the Court in the area of intellectual property.
- 28 Modification of the Protocol on the Statute of the European Investment Bank.
- 29 Union own resources – ceiling and creation of new resources. (National ratifications also required.)

C Qualified majority and consent of EP

- 30 Implementing measures of the Union's own resources system.

D Qualified majority and consultation of EP

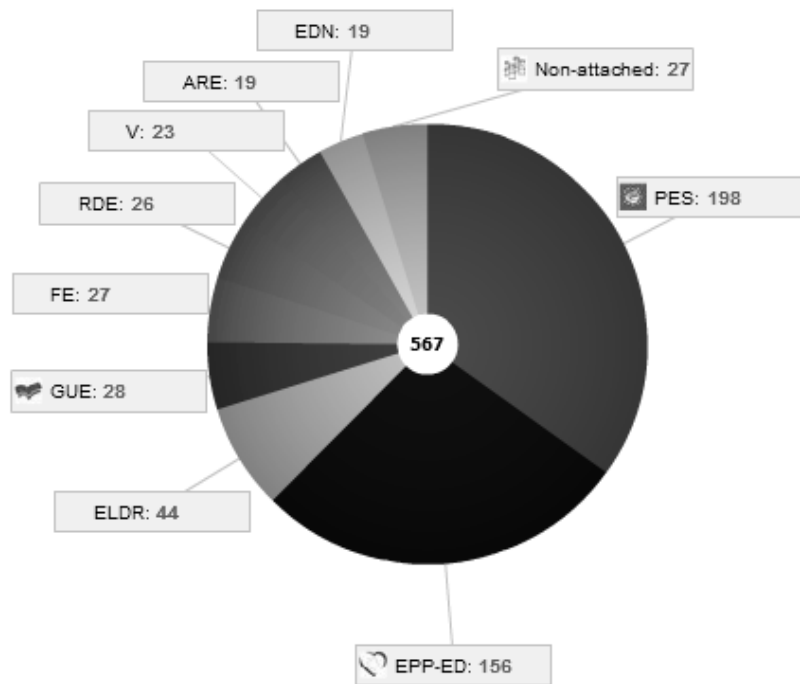
- 31 Measures to facilitate diplomatic protection.
- 32 Research: specific programmes implementing framework programme.
- 33 Outermost regions.

The Council may take a unanimous decision, after consulting the EP, to switch to the ordinary legislative procedure (second subparagraph 3 of Article 65 [81] TFEU).

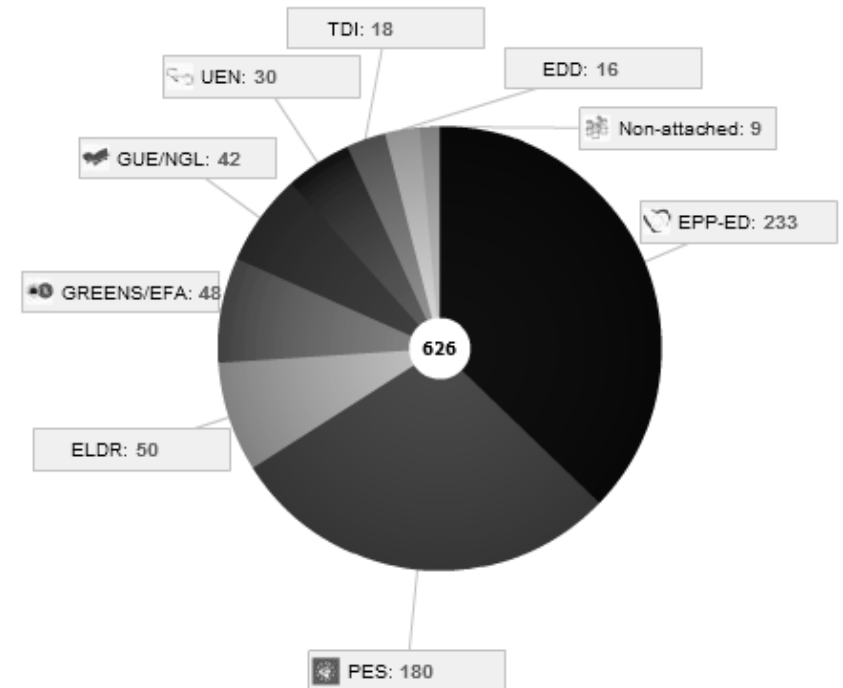
** The Council may take a unanimous decision, after consulting the EP, to switch to the ordinary legislative procedure for points (d), (f) and (g) (second subparagraph of paragraph 2 of Article 137 [153] TFEU).

Annex B: European Parliament compositions (incoming parliaments)¹⁵

1994

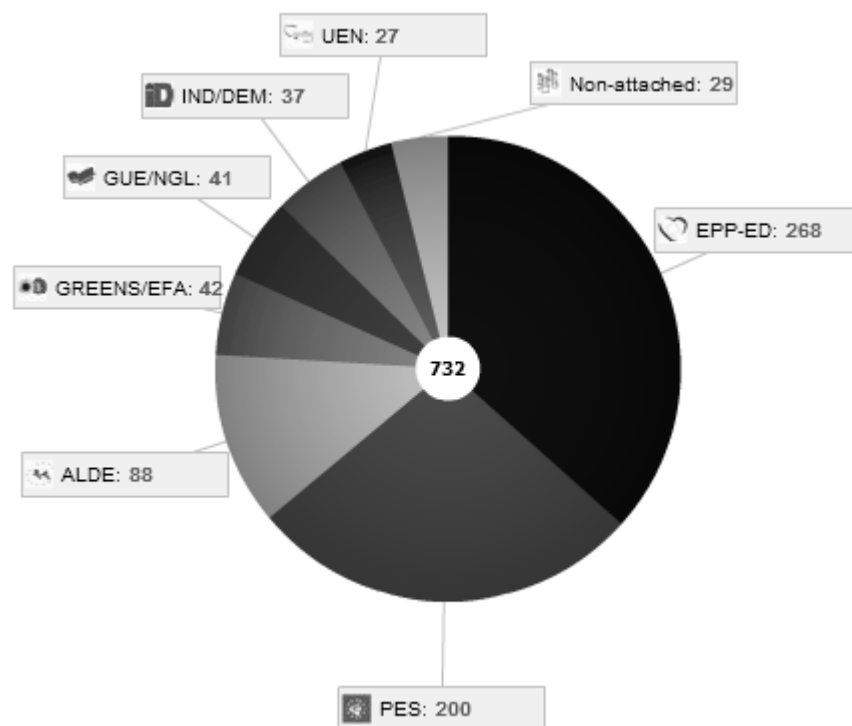


1999

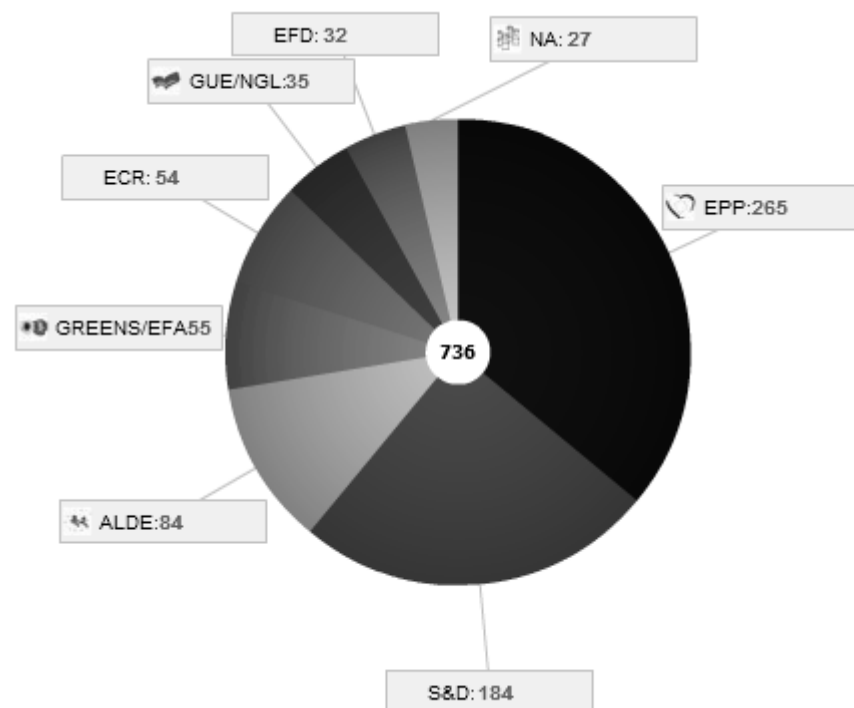


¹⁵ All graphs taken from: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/004a50d310/Samenstelling-van-het-Parlement.html>

2004



2009



Annex C: Coding scheme

The analysis of the work programmes will be done by coding individual sentences of the work programmes of the European Commission. Every sentence needs to be coded in only one of the categories that are defined in this coding scheme. Whenever a sentence can be coded in different categories, because it seems to mention multiple categories, the context of the sentence (the paragraph in which it is found) needs to be examined in order to code the sentence in the correct category. As an example: a sentence might be “research activities of universities should be closely linked to education given at those universities.” This sentence might be about education, or about research and innovation. In that case, the context of the sentence should be examined. If the rest of the paragraph is about education, this sentence should also be coded in that category.

The coding will be done on just the ‘core’ text of the work programmes. This means that anything in the table of contents, possible lists of figures, any annexes, etc. will not be included in the coding process.

In order to determine a number of good categories that could be used to code the Work Programmes, the categories from the topic codebook of the Policy Agendas Project¹⁶, a list of the current Directorates-General of the EU¹⁷, and the portfolios in the different European Commissions from 1995 until 2012 (the period to be studied) were compared. First, categories that appeared in all three sources were defined (such as energy, and economic and financial affairs). After that, a number of categories that do not occur in the topic codebook of the policy agendas project, but that are significant for the EU were added. This includes the enlargement processes of the EU, and the single market, taxation, and customs union categories.

Of course, situations where a topic might fit in more than one category may occur. Examples of categories that may overlap when they are not carefully defined are “education” and “research and innovation,” and “economic and financial affairs” and “single market, taxation, and customs union.” Whenever problems with overlapping categories can be expected, additional instructions are given in order to clarify which topics should be coded in which category.

If a sentence contains a number of topics that might be coded in different categories, the first topic should be used to code the sentence. For example, a sentence containing “a renewed social agenda (...), combat climate change and promote energy security, (...) and issues like migration and ageing society” (from the work programme for 2009) refers to a number of applicable coding categories. In this case, it should be coded in category 18 (social policy), since a new social agenda is the first topic.

¹⁶ Policy Agendas Project. (2012, June 2006). Topic Codebook | Policy Agendas. Retrieved 16-02-2012, 2012, from <http://www.policyagendas.org/page/topic-codebook>

¹⁷ European Commission. (2012, 28-02-2012). Departments (Directorates-General) and services. Retrieved 16-02-2012, 2012, from http://ec.europa.eu/about/ds_en.htm

Subsequent sentences should then be coded in the order in which the topics occur in the first sentence. In this example, a next sentence should then be coded in category 8 (environment and climate action), the third in category 15 (justice and home affairs), etc. When there are more sentences than topics that have to be coded in this way, the coder should continue coding all sentences by continuing with the first topic of the original sentence (and again go down the categories mentioned, until all applicable sentences are coded). Of course, if in such a situation a sentence clearly mentioned a different category, it should be coded in that category.

Whenever a sentence lacks a clear focus, coders have to look at the context of the sentence (the paragraph in which it occurs), and if that does not clarify it enough, external events (such as economic crises, enlargement processes, etc.) may be taken into account if it is clear to which event the sentence refers.

The categories to be used are (in alphabetical order): agriculture; competition; economic and financial affairs; education; energy; enlargement; enterprise and innovation; environment and climate action; foreign relations and foreign aid; government operations; health and consumer protection; information society; internal market, taxation, and customs union; justice and home affairs; maritime affairs and fisheries; research and innovation; social policy; external trade; transport. Additionally, an empty category is included, meant for sentences that do not fit any of the other categories.

To make clear what these categories exactly are, a short overview of every category (including some examples) will be given. The examples that are given are either taken from the Policy Agendas Project codebook, from the mandates (as discussed on their websites) of the respective EU DG, and from the Treaties of the EU.

Finally, whenever questions on the necessity of including a certain category may come up, a short explanation of why that category is included will be given.

0. Empty

This category should be used when a sentence does not fit any of the other categories.

1. Agriculture

This category includes all topics related to agricultural policy. Topics include farm support, the Common Agricultural Policy, rural development,

Note: topics related to food safety and consumer protection related to agriculture should be coded in category 12, “health and consumer protection”. This includes genetic engineering of agricultural products (and as such, that topic also needs to be coded in category 12).

Note (2): topics related to the trade of agricultural products with third parties should be included in category 9 (external trade).

Note (3): Trade of agricultural products within the EU should be coded in category 14 (internal market, taxation and customs union).

2. Competition

Competition has been an important policy area of the EC/EU for a long time. This argument is supported by the fact that there has been a DG for competition for the entire period that will be studied. Besides that, it has a very ‘real’ influence through the issuing of fines that may add up to hundreds of millions of euros to businesses that breach EU law. See for example the case of Heineken and Grolsch²⁰, or the case of Microsoft including its Media Player software in its Windows operating systems²¹.

This category includes all topics related to the competition policies of the EU. This includes the main areas of EU competition policy: merger control, state aid control, abuse of dominant market positions, cartels, and antitrust regulation.

Note: instances where competition policy is discussed with regards to a specific sector should be coded in this category (for example punishing cartels in the telecommunications sector).

3. Economic and financial/monetary affairs

This category contains all topics regarding economic, financial and monetary affairs and policies. These include the European Monetary Union, the Stability and Growth Pact, (the introduction of) the Euro, the current economic and financial crisis, the Regional Policy, inflation control, price level, the monetary supply.

Note: General discussions of price levels should be coded in this category; whenever the price level for a certain policy field (such as agriculture) is discussed, that particular instance should be coded in the category related to that policy.

4. Education

This category includes all topics that are related to policy in the field of Education. This includes primary, secondary, and higher education, vocational training, student mobility and student mobility programmes (such as Erasmus), lifelong learning, the Bologna process, and (improving) the quality of education.

Note: only discussions of education by universities are to be included here. Whenever research by universities is discussed, it should be coded in category 17 (research and innovation).

5. Energy

This category includes everything related to energy policy, including: the energy market, sustainable energy production; energy transport and consumption; securing the energy supply; nuclear energy; renewable energy sources (hydroelectricity, solar energy, wind energy); natural gas reserves; coal energy; alternative and renewable energy; and energy efficiency.

²⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6566827.stm>

²¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6998272.stm>

6. *Enlargement*

All topics related to the enlargement processes of the EU should be coded in this category. These topics include: the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance; conditions for enlargement; the Copenhagen criteria; candidate countries; accession negotiations; and technical assistance for candidate countries.

7. *Enterprise and industry*

All topics that are related to Europe's general enterprise and industry environments should be coded in this category. This includes: industrial innovation; supporting Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs); sustainable development of industrial sectors; and restructuring of industrial sectors.

Note: this category is meant for general issues relating to actions for enterprises and industries. Any discussion of actions aimed at specific industries should be coded in the category for that subject (for example: promoting innovation in the energy industry should be coded in category 5, energy).

8. *Environment and climate action*

All topics found relating to environmental policy and climate action are to be coded in this category. This includes: promotion of a low-carbon economy; environmental protection; hazardous waste; air pollution; global warming; noise pollution; acid rain; (automobile) emissions; endangered species protection; water pollution and conservation; and forest protection.

9. *External trade*

This category includes everything related to trade between the EU and third parties. This includes: enable market access to other markets for European companies; export credits; trade regulation; trade negotiations; the World Trade Organization; the Doha conference; trade disputes and agreements; and the creation of a "global system for fair and open trade".

Note: discussions of sector-specific trade should be coded in this category and not in the category of that sector (for example the trade of bananas should be coded here, not in category 1, agriculture).

10. *Foreign relations and foreign aid*

This category includes all topics related to the external relations of the European Union and its Member States and all foreign aid related policies. This includes: the European External Action Service; EuropeAid; external relations with third countries or organisations;; the Common Foreign and Security Policy; the European Neighbourhood Policy; humanitarian aid; and humanitarian crisis response.

Note: foreign trade relations should not be coded in this category, but rather in category 9 (external trade).

Note (2): security and defence policy should be coded in this category. Terrorism and the combatting of terrorism, however, should be coded in category 15 (the justice and home affairs category).

Note (3): *discussions of specific agreements in an international context should be coded in the category for that policy area. For example: discussions of the Kyoto protocol should be coded in category 8.*

11. Institutional operations

All topics regarding the operation of the European Commission or activities by other institutions and interinstitutional-relations should be included in this category. This includes: EU or Commission budgets; communication priorities; interinstitutional-relations; promoting transparency in EU decision making; operational efficiency; and auditing.

Note: discussions of legislative reform for a specific sector should be coded in the category for that sector. For example: reform of legislation in the field of competition policy should be coded in category 2.

Note (2): discussions of topics that the Commission wishes to communicate (better) are also to be coded in this category. For example: a statement that there should be more communication about the EU's consumer protection policies should be coded in this category.

12. Health and consumer protection

All topics related to health policies and the protection of consumers with regards to their health should be coded in this category. This includes: food safety; product safety; health care; disease control; the European medicines agency; regulation of the drug industry; drug labelling and marketing; alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse; and malnutrition.

13. Information society and media

This category includes all topics related to information technology and other media. This includes: research on information and communication technologies; satellite systems (such as the Galileo navigation system; the information society; ICT research; regulations of electronic communications industry; mobile communications; telecommunications; and computer security.

14. Internal market, taxation and customs union

All topics that are concerned with the internal market (in general), taxation issues and dealing with the customs union should be coded in this category. This means that all issues concerning the free movement of goods, services, labour, and citizens all fall into this category. The topics include: the free movement of capital, labour, goods, and services; customs duties; trade within the EU; selling arrangements; and taxation (agreements).

Note: discussions of sector-specific issues relating to the internal market should be coded in this category (for example: trade in agricultural products between EU Member States is coded here).

15. Justice and home affairs

Everything related to justice and home affairs should be coded in this category. This includes: fundamental rights; (European) citizenship; consumer, marketing, and contract law; criminal justice; asylum; borders and visas; free movement of people; organised crime; human trafficking; terrorism; police cooperation; Eurojust; money laundering; and illegal drug production and trafficking.

Note: discrimination is generally regarded as a part of this category. In the EU, however, discrimination is specifically a part of the EU's social policies, based on the social chapter of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Discrimination should therefore be coded in category 18 (social policy) and not here.

16. Maritime affairs and Fisheries

This category is meant for all topics concerned with the fishing industry and maritime policies. Examples of this category include: the Common Fisheries Policy; an integrated approach to maritime policies; the supply of seafood; the maritime economy; carriage of goods by sea; maritime industry; maritime freight industry regulation; territorial sea boundaries; and regulation of exploration and recovery of international seabed hard minerals.

Note: transport over water should be coded in this category, and not in category 19 (transport).

17. Research and innovation

Everything related to research and innovation policies should be coded in this category. This category is meant for policies regarding research and innovation in light of the EU's goal to become the biggest knowledge economy in the world. This category includes: the European Research Area; the Joint Research Centre; the EU Framework Programmes for R&D policy; coordination of national and EU research activities; technology transfer; and university-industry cooperation in research.

Note: research in universities should also be included in this category. Education by universities should not be coded in this category, but rather in category 4 (education).

Note (2): Whenever sector-specific research is mentioned, it should be coded in the category for that sector (if present). For example: "research on nuclear energy" should be coded in category 5.

18. Social policy

All topics related to social policies of the EU should be coded in this category. This includes: employment; working conditions (including health and safety in the workplace); pensions; social inclusion/exclusion; discrimination; the European Social Fund; social security; housing policy; and poverty.

Note: Employment and pensions might also be coded in category 3, economic and financial affairs, depending on the context of the instance to be coded. For example: discussion of the rights to pension benefits should be coded in this category (18); discussion of regulating liquidity of pension funds should be coded in category 3 (economic and financial affairs).

Note (2): Whenever reintegration and activation policies regarding employment and unemployment are discussed, those instances should be coded in this category.

Note (3): Discrimination in this category includes discrimination on race, gender, disability and religion.

19. Transport

Everything related to transport should be coded in this category. This includes: the extension of transport networks throughout Europe; transport safety; air travel safety; airports; air traffic control; railroad transportation; railroad, trucking and airline regulations; and motor vehicle safety.

Note: transportation over water should be coded in category 16 (maritime affairs and fisheries).

Annex D: Attention for policy areas (in % of total number of sentences)

		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
0	Empty	1,64	2,29	2,47	0,49	0,00	0,82	0,00	1,44	1,13	0,63	2,27	2,28	1,33	1,91	2,27	0,00	0,00	0,51
1	Agriculture	1,32	1,38	1,85	1,94	3,06	2,47	1,20	2,52	1,88	0,00	1,82	0,91	2,67	2,39	0,57	1,71	0,70	1,03
2	Competition	3,62	0,46	3,09	1,94	1,53	5,76	1,20	0,72	0,75	0,63	0,45	0,91	0,00	2,87	3,41	0,00	0,70	0,51
3	Economic and Financial/monetary affairs	9,21*	12,84	11,73	15,53	10,71	12,35	7,78	14,03	12,78	18,24	8,64	12,33	4,44	7,66	14,20	16,00	18,88	29,23
4	Education	1,32	1,38	2,47	1,94	0,51	3,29	1,20	0,36	1,50	0,00	0,45	0,46	0,00	0,48	0,00	0,00	0,70	1,03
5	Energy	2,30	3,67	0,00	0,49	1,53	1,23	0,00	0,72	0,75	1,26	1,36	2,28	5,33	2,39	4,55	1,71	1,40	2,05
6	Enlargement	2,30	4,13	3,09	9,71	3,57	3,29	7,19	8,27	15,79	14,47	2,73	1,83	1,78	1,91	1,70	1,14	1,40	1,03
7	Enterprise and industry	4,61	3,21	0,62	2,91	1,02	1,65	2,99	0,36	0,38	0,63	0,45	0,91	0,44	4,78	0,57	1,71	2,80	1,54
8	Environment and climate action	6,91	5,05	1,23	4,37	3,06	4,12	10,18	5,40	6,02	3,14	7,73	6,39	4,44	7,18	7,39	5,14	5,59	4,62
9	External trade	4,28	4,59	4,94	5,34	5,10	2,88	5,99	3,24	3,38	2,52	2,73	4,57	3,56	1,91	3,41	4,00	3,50	3,59
10	Foreign relations and foreign aid	9,21*	15,14	14,81	9,22	12,76	9,47	11,98	20,14	11,28	15,09	10,91	8,68	6,67	12,44	11,36	8,57	9,09	11,28
11	Institutional operations	21,71*	11,01	19,14	12,62	28,57	13,99	17,37	15,83	22,56	27,67	29,55	28,77	44,89	23,44	27,84	34,29	26,57	16,41
12	Health and consumer protection	1,32	1,83	1,23	5,34	4,08	4,53	7,78	4,68	1,50	1,26	2,73	2,74	1,33	5,74	1,70	1,14	0,70	1,54
13	Information society and media	7,57**	5,96	2,47	3,40	3,06	6,17	4,79	1,80	1,50	2,52	1,36	1,37	0,00	1,91	0,00	0,57	2,80	2,56
14	Internal market, taxation and customs union	1,97	5,96	6,79	4,85	4,08	5,35	4,19	2,52	3,38	0,00	2,27	1,83	2,67	2,39	3,41	1,71	6,29	7,18
15	Justice and home affairs	5,92	2,29	6,79	2,91	4,59	4,12	4,79	10,07	9,02	5,03	10,00	11,42	7,56	7,66	9,66	10,29	10,49	5,64
16	Maritime affairs and fisheries	2,30	1,38	0,00	0,00	0,51	2,88	0,60	1,08	0,38	0,00	0,91	0,91	1,78	1,44	0,57	0,57	0,70	0,00
17	Research and innovation	2,30	2,29	1,85	2,91	2,55	3,70	3,59	1,80	1,88	1,89	4,09	2,74	3,11	2,39	1,70	1,14	0,70	1,03
18	Social policy	7,89**	11,93	14,20	13,59	7,14	9,88	5,99	3,60	3,38	4,40	7,27	6,85	7,56	7,18	5,11	9,14	4,90	7,69
19	Transport	2,30	3,21	1,23	0,49	2,55	2,06	1,20	1,44	0,75	0,63	2,27	1,83	0,44	1,91	0,57	1,14	2,10	1,54

* Top three most discussed policy areas

** Top five most discussed policy areas

Annex E: Political positioning of the European Commission and its members

Left right positions marked with a + mean the following: the country of that Commissioner was not included in the expert survey used. In order to get a score for the left-right position, the average of all other parties that belong to the same EP party have been taken. For example: the score for the left-right position of the party of Vivian Reding (both Barroso Commissions) is the average of all parties that are affiliated with the EPP in the European Parliament and that are included in the survey.

1. Santer Commission (1995 – 1999) – Average left-right position: 4.85

Name (Member State)	Political (national/European parliament)	Party	Party position (left – right, 1 – 10) ²²	Portfolio
Jacques Santer (LU)	Christian Social People's Party (CSV) European People's Party (EPP)		5.23 ⁺	President
Leon Brittan (UK)	Conservatives European Democrats (ED)		6.92	Vice-president, commercial policy, external relations (North America, Australasia, East Asia, OECD, WTO)
Manuel Marin (ES)	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) Party of European Socialists (PES)		4.13	Vice-president, external relations (Mediterranean, Latin America, Middle East)
Karel van Miert (BE)	Socialist Party (PS) PES		2.44	Competition
Marcelino Oreja (ES)	People's Party (PP) European People's Party (EPP)		6.63	Relations with European Parliament, culture, audiovisual policy
Monika Wulf-Matheis (DE)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) PES		4.00	Regional policy
Emma Bonino (IT)	Transnational Radical Party (/Bonino List? (LB)) European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR)		4.60	Consumer policy, fisheries, European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)
Hans van den Broek (NL)	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) EPP		5.20	Relations with Central and Eastern Europe, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), External Service
Anita Gradin (SE)	Swedish Social Democratic Workers' Party (SAP) PES		3.44	Immigration, justice and home affairs, financial control, anti-fraud, relations with European Ombudsman
Neil Kinnock (UK)	Labour PES		4.73	Transport
Yves-Thibault de Silguy (FR)	Independent			Economic and financial affairs (including monetary matters)
João de Deus Pinheiro (PT)	Social Democratic Party (PSD) EPP		5.60	Relations with African, Caribbean, Pacific countries, South Africa, Lomé convention
Edith Cresson (FR)	Socialist Party (PS) PES		3.43	Research, science and technology
Mario Monti (IT)	Independent			Internal market, services, customs and taxation

²² Taken from the Chapel Hill 1999 expert survey data, available at http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data_pp.php

Erkki Liikanen (FI)	Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP) PES	3.40	Budget, personnel, administration
Martin Bangemann (DE)	Free Democratic Party (FDP) ELDR	6.07	Industrial affairs, information and telecommunications technologies
Padraig Flynn (IE)	Fianna Fáil - The Republican Party (FF) Alliance for Europe of the Nations (AEN)	6.50	Employment and social affairs, relations with the European Economic and Social Committee
Ritt Bjerregaard (DK)	Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne) PES	3.86	Environment, nuclear security
Franz Fischler (AT)	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) EPP	6.20	Agriculture and rural development
Christos Papoutsis (EL)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) PES	5.00	Energy, Euratom Supply Agency, SMEs, tourism

2. Prodi Commission (1999 – 2004) – Average left-right position: 4.87

Name (Member State)	Political Party (national / European parliament)	Party position (left – right, 1 – 10)²³	Portfolio
Romano Prodi (IT)	The Democrats (I Democratici) PES / ELDR	3.92	President
Neil Kinnock (UK)	Labour PES	5.18	Vice-president, administrative reform
Loyola de Palacio (ES)	PP EPP	6.92	Vice-president, transport, energy
Mario Monti (IT)	Independent		Competition
Franz Fischler (AT)	ÖVP EPP	7.00	Agriculture, rural development, fisheries
Erkki Liikanen (FI)	SDP PES	3.67	Enterprise, information society
Frits Bolkenstein (NL)	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) ELDR	7.38	Internal market
Philippe Busquin (BE)	PS PES	3.35	Research
Pedro Solbes Mira (ES)	PSOE PES	4.00	Economic and monetary affairs
Poul Nielson (DK)	Socialdemokraterne PES	4.00	Development, humanitarian aid
Günter Verheugen (DE)	SPD PES	4.00	Enlargement
Christopher Patten (UK)	Conservatives ED	7.72	External relations

²³ Taken from the Chapel Hill 2002 expert survey data, available at http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data_pp.php

Pascal Lamy (FR)	PS PES	3.85	Trade
David Byrne (IE)	Independent		Health and consumer protection
Michel Barnier (FR)	Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) / Rally for the Republic (RPR) EPP	7.00	Regional policy
Viviane Reding (LU)	CSV EPP		Education and culture
Michaele Schreyer (DE)	The Greens (Die Grünen) European Green Party (EGP)	3.36	Budget
Margot Wallström (SE)	SAP PES	3.50	Environment
Antonio Vitorino (PT)	Socialist Party (PS) PES	4.00	Justice and home affairs
Anna Diamantopoulou (EL)	PASOK PES	3.91	Employment and social affairs

3. First Barroso Commission (2004 – 2009) – Average left-right position: 5.89

Name (Member State)	Political Party (national / European parliament)	Party position (left – right, 1 – 10)²⁴	Portfolio
José Manuel Barroso (PT)	PSD EPP	6,70	President
Margot Wallström (SE)	SAP PES	3,56	Vice-president, institutional relations, communication strategy
Günther Verheugen (DE)	SPD PES	3,55	Vice-president, enterprise and industry
Jacques Barrot (FR)	UMP EPP	7,44	Vice-president, transport
Siim Kallas (EE)	Estonian Reform Party (Eest Reformierakond) ELDR	7,40	Vice-president, administrative affairs, audit, anti-fraud
Franco Frattini (IT)	Forza Italia (FI) EPP	7,14	Vice-president, justice, freedom and security
Viviane Reding (LU)	CSV EPP	6,74 ⁺	Information society and media
Stavros Dimas (EL)	New Democracy (ND) EPP	6,44	Environment
Joaquin Almunia (ES)	PSOE PES	3,58	Economic and monetary affairs
Joe Borg (MT)	Nationalist Party (PN) EPP	6,74 ⁺	Maritime affairs and fisheries

²⁴ Taken from the Chapel Hill 2006 expert survey data, available at http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data_pp.php

Janez Potočnik (SI)	Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) ELDR	3,40	Science and research
Olli Rehn (FI)	Centre Party (Suomen Keskusta) ELDR	5,45	Enlargement
László Kovács (HU)	Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) PES	3,67	Taxation and customs union
Neelie Kroes (NL)	VVD ELDR	7,45	Competition
Mariann Fischer Boel (DK)	Liberal Party of Denmark (Venstre) ELDR	7,22	Agriculture and rural development
Benita Ferrero-Waldner (AT)	ÖVP EPP	7,00	External Relations, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)
Charlie McCreevy (IE)	FF ELDR	6,20	Internal market and services
Vladimír Špidla (CZ)	Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) PES	3,43	Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities
Andris Piebalgs (LV)	Latvian Way (Latvijas Ceļš) ELDR	6,75	Energy
Meglena Kuneva * (BG)	National Movement for Stability and Progress (HN/CB) ELDR	6,08	Consumer protection**
Leonard Orban * (RO)	PNL ELDR	6,70	Multilingualism***
Markos Kyprianou (CY)	Democratic Party (DIKO) ELDR	6,72 ⁺	Health
Catherine Ashton (UK)	Labour PES	4,88	External trade
Dalia Grybauskaitė (LT)	Independent		Financial programming and budget
Danuta Hübner (PL)	PO EPP	5,29	Regional policy
Louis Michel (BE)	Reformist Movement (MR) ELDR	6,67	Development and humanitarian aid
Ján Figel’	Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) EPP	7,15	Education, training, culture, youth
* Served from January 1st, 2007 ** Before 2007, consumer protection was part of the health portfolio *** Before 2007, multilingualism was part of the education, training and culture portfolio ⁺ Country was not included in the expert survey used. In order to get a score for the left-right position, the average of all other parties that belong to the same EP party have been taken. For example: the score for the left-right position of the party of Vivian Reding is the average of all parties that are affiliated with the EPP in the European Parliament and that are included in the survey.			

4. Second Barroso Comission (2009 – 2014) – Average left-right position: 6.11

Name (Member State)	Political Party (national / European parliament)	Party position (left – right, 1 – 10) ²⁵	Portfolio
José Manuel Barroso (PT)	PSD EPP	6,67	President
Cahterine Ashton (UK)	Labour PES	4	Vice-president, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Viviane Reding (LU)	CSV EPP	6,75 ⁺	Vice-president, justice, fundamental rights and citizenship
Joaquín Almunia (ES)	PSOE PES	3,67	Vice-president, competition
Siim Kallas (EE)	Eest Reformierakond ELDR	7,08	Vice-president, transport
Neelie Kroes (NL)	VVD ELDR	7,68	Vice-president, digital agenda
Antonio Tajani (IT)	PdL EPP	7,56	Vice-president, industry and entrepreneurship
Maroš Šefčovič (SK)	Direction – Social Democracy (Smer) PES	3,36	Vice-president, inter-institutional relations and administration
Olli Rehn (FI)	Suomen Keskusta ELDR	5,70	Vice-president, economic and monetary affairs and the Euro
Janez Potočnik (SI)	LDS ELDR	6,96 ⁺	Environment
Andris Piebalgs (LV)	Latvijas Ceļš EPP	6,75 ⁺	Development
Michel Barnier (FR)	UMP EPP	7,22	Internal market and services
Androulla Vassiliou (CY)	United Democrats (EDI) ELDR	6,96 ⁺	Education, culture, multilingualism and youth
Algirdas Šemeta (LT)	Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD) EPP	6,62	Taxation and customs union, audit and anti-fraud
Karel de Gucht (BE)	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD) ELDR	6,93	Trade
John Dalli (MT)	PN EPP	6,75 ⁺	Health and consumer policy
Máire Geoghegan-Quinn (IE)	FF ELDR	7,25	Research, innovation and science
Janusz Lewandowski (PL)	Civil Platform (PO) EPP	6,00	Financial programming and budget

²⁵ Taken from the Chapel Hill 2010 expert survey data, available at http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data_pp.php

Maria Damanaki (EL)	PASOK PES	4,36	Maritime affairs and fisheries
Kristalina Georgieva (BG)	Citizens for European Development Of Bulgaria (GERB) EPP	6,08	International cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response
Günther Oettinger (DE)	Christian Democratic Union (CDU) EPP	6,13	Energy
Johannes Hahn (AT)	ÖVP EPP	7,07	Regional policy
Connie Hedegaard (DK)	Conservative People's Party (KFP) EPP	7,55	Climate action
Štefan Füle (CZ)	ČSSD PES	2,89	Enlargement and ENP
László Andor (HU)	MSZP PES	3,35	Employment, social affairs and inclusion
Cecilia Malmström (SE)	Liberal People's Party (FP) ELDR	7,07	Home affairs
Dacian Cioloș (RO)	Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) EPP	6,55	Agriculture and rural development