

# **Allocating political attention in the EU's Foreign and Security Policy: The effect of supranational agenda-setters**

## **Online Appendix**

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## Summary of the data collection and coding process

To measure the distribution of political attention to foreign policy issues, the study relies on data about the duration of meetings of Council working parties active in this area between the start of 2001 and the end of 2014. The original source of information for the working party meeting data are calendars maintained by the Council Secretariat. The calendars were obtained from the Council Secretariat in response to formal requests for access to documents. Unfortunately, these calendars do not use uniform working party descriptors. They also do not distinguish meetings of official working parties from other types of meetings held in the Council. Thus, to link meetings of the same working party held under slightly different names, and to distinguish working party from non-working party meetings, the working party titles in the calendars were matched with the working party titles in the Council's half-yearly updated 'List of preparatory bodies'.<sup>1</sup>

Different versions of the list indicate the population of working parties in existence at a particular point in time. Often, they also indicate a particular date when a new working party was established or abolished since the publication of the last version of the list. Only meetings of bodies included in the list at the time of the meeting constitute official working party meetings and are therefore included in the dataset. The different language versions of the list were also helpful in unambiguously translating the French language working party titles in the original calendars into their English language equivalents. The calendars provide the duration of meetings in half-day terms and have a single entry for joint meetings, which are especially common in some areas of the CFSP. To arrive at a standardised measurement unit for a working party meeting, the data were first transformed into event format, with each half-day of a meeting forming a single event (or row in the data matrix); and joint meetings being split into separate events as well, one for each working party.

This event data matrix of half-day working party meetings, each row indicating a half-day working party meeting at a particular date, can then be aggregated to span larger periods of time. For the purposes of this study, the data were aggregated by semester, where each row indicates the total number of half-day meetings of a working party during the respective six-month period. Given that the rotating Presidency changes every half a year, the semester seems to be the most appropriate temporal unit for comparative purposes. This dataset forms the basis

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<sup>1</sup> Accessible via the Council's register at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/int?lang=EN&typ=ADV> (accessed 16/11/2018), see e.g. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5058-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

for further aggregations and the calculation of different dependent variables for the analyses reported in the main text.

The original working party meeting data reaches back to the beginning of 1995 (Häge, 2016). However, this study focuses on the post-2000 period. As the Council did not publish lists of its preparatory bodies before 1999, the pre-1999 data are subject to more coding error. This early time period also provides little relevant information for determining whether the allocation of political attention changed as part of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty at the end of 2009. More importantly, the organisational structures of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) only became fully operational in 2001. Focusing on the period after the year 2000 ensures that the Council's organisational structures in the area of foreign affairs remain largely constant during the study period, which is essential for making valid over-time comparisons. At the lowest level of aggregation, the dataset consists of information about the number of meetings of 37 foreign affairs Council working parties over 28 semesters, resulting in a total of 1036 observations. Some of the analyses reported in the article aggregate the data further by type of CFSP working party or entire policy sub-areas, leading to smaller sample sizes.

## Policy categorisation of foreign affairs working parties

### List of foreign affairs working parties by foreign policy area

Policy area	Sub-area	Chair	Name of working party			
Common Foreign and Security Policy	Horizontal	HR	Consular Affairs			
			Conventional Arms Exports			
			Foreign Relations Counsellors			
			Global Disarmament and Arms Control			
			Human Rights			
			Law of the Sea			
			Nikolaidis Group			
			Non-Proliferation			
			OSCE and the Council of Europe			
			Political and Security Committee			
			Public International Law			
			Terrorism			
			Transatlantic Relations			
United Nations						
	Regional	HR	Africa			
			Asia-Oceania			
			Central and South East Europe			
			Eastern Europe and Central Asia			
			Latin America			
			Mashrak/Maghreb			
			Middle East/Gulf			
			Middle East Peace Process			
			Western Balkans Region			
				CSDP	HR Elected Elected	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
Military Committee						
Military Committee Working Group						
Politico-Military Working Party						
Economic External Relations	Trade	Presidency	ACP Working Party			
			Trade Policy Committee			
			Commodities			
			Dual-Use Goods			
			EFTA			
			Generalised System of Preferences			
			Trade Questions			
				Development	Presidency	Development Cooperation
						Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
						Preparation for International Development Conference

*Notes:* The table reflects the structure and names of working parties at the end of the study period. ACP = African, Caribbean and Pacific, CSDP = Common Security and Defence Policy, EFTA = European Free Trade Area, HR=High Representative, OSCE = Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

## **Discussion of measurement issues**

The approach to measuring political attention employed in the article deviates in a number of respects from those of existing studies of political attention, which largely follow a common template developed by the Comparative Agendas Project. Firstly, the approach employed in this study does not only count whether an issue was on the agenda of a meeting, but also how long that meeting dealt with that issue. An issue that was discussed for a full day clearly received more attention than an issue that was only discussed for half a day. This is not to deny that a number of extraneous factors, like political conflict or the complexity of the policy problem, determine the duration of discussions. However, these factors are explanatory variables and should not be conflated with the measurement of the outcome variable. Usually, the same factors influencing the length of discussions also affect the number of times an issue is on the agenda of a decision-making body. In this respect, taking into account the duration of discussions provides a more fine-grained measure of political attention than counting the number of times an issue was on the agenda of a decision-making body.

Another question relates to the appropriateness of using the titles of working parties to form a policy classification scheme. Existing research on political attention has shown that institutional jurisdictions and the content of policy do not always overlap (e.g., Jones et al., 1993). In principle, coding the content of discussions is preferable to coding the remits of decision-making bodies in which these discussions take place. However, manually coding the agendas of more than 25,000 foreign affairs working party meetings would have been excessively costly. Moreover, working party agendas are only available in electronic form on the Council's website since 2004. Restricting the sample to the post-2004 period would have weakened the study's ability to robustly identify medium- to long-term trends in the allocation of political attention in the pre-Lisbon treaty period, which is a precondition for determining whether the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty induced systematic changes in the allocation of political attention thereafter. A comparison of the number of working party meetings with the number of agenda documents listed on the Council's website per year also sheds serious doubts on the comprehensiveness of these records. Finally, access to the agendas of some foreign affairs working parties remains restricted for diplomatic and security reasons. Thus, relying on agenda documents would have been prohibitively costly and severely limiting the scope and comprehensiveness of the analysis.

In the case of Council working parties, the potential benefits of coding the content of discussions directly rather than the remit of the body in which these discussions take place are

also more limited than in the case of legislative committees. Working parties consist of diplomats and national officials, which are experts in a particular policy area and take their directions from government ministers. Unlike legislators, who are more independent and have more to gain from encroaching on each other's jurisdiction, national officials are less likely to act as policy entrepreneurs. In addition, from a structural point of view, the hurdles for establishing and abolishing working parties are quite low. When new issues arise or old issues fade, the Committee of Permanent Representatives can create new or dissolve existing working parties through a procedural decision by simple majority. The briefs of working parties are clearly defined (Council of the EU 2008); and when an issue touches the brief of more than one working party, the respective working parties can consider the issue in joint meetings. Indeed, both organisational changes and joint meetings have been common throughout the study period. Thus, the organisational structure of the working party system is more flexible and responsive to changes in public problem perception than that of legislative committees.

While the data offer unprecedented insights in terms of over-time and cross-sectional coverage of the Council's foreign and security policy, and provide a high temporal resolution, another limitation of the data is that their policy issue resolution is bound by the remit of individual working parties. The data allow examining the variation of meeting time across working parties dealing with different types of policy issues, but they do not allow examining the distribution of individual issues within the policy remit of a single working party. Possible agenda-setting effects of the chair might not be reflected in the measure if its level of aggregation is too high, i.e., if the allocation of attention to policy issues shifts *within* rather than *between* the policy areas covered by working parties. However, for most practical purposes, the 37 working parties dealing with different CFSP topics provide a sufficiently high level of policy resolution. Indeed, while the hierarchical classification scheme of the Comparative Agendas Project consists of more than 200 sub-categories, most quantitative studies of the allocation of political attention rely solely on the top-level differentiation between roughly 20 major topics (e.g., Alexandrova et al., 2016; Baumgartner et al., 2009; Mortensen et al., 2011).

Of course, an analytically derived scheme based on consistent categorisation criteria has many desirable properties, and its common use allows for international comparisons. However, for the purposes of this study, which does not make comparative claims, the additional costs of coding tens of thousands of agenda documents, even if that was practically feasible, would far outweigh potential benefits. Further below, this appendix includes a number of examples of working party agendas to further support the assertion that the content of agendas generally

corresponds to what the working party title suggests are the issues the working party is dealing with. At the same time, the limited agenda item descriptions by themselves (i.e. without at least taking into account the identity of the working party) would often not provide sufficient information to reliably classify items according to a more elaborate coding scheme.

## **Examples of working party agendas**

This section provides a systematically selected set of examples of working party meeting agendas to illustrate the close correspondence between the title of working parties and the content of their agendas. The selection of working party meeting agendas includes agendas from each of the five policy sub-areas contained in the 'List of foreign affairs working parties by foreign policy area' provided above. Within each sub-area, the aim was to collect agendas at three different points in time (2004, 2009, and 2014) from the working party that was listed alphabetically first. The year 2004 is the first year for which working party agendas are available on a large scale, the year 2014 marks the end of the study period, and the year 2009 is an intermediate point in time. Unfortunately, in the sub-group of horizontal working parties, agendas for the Consular Affairs working party are mostly classified, and the respective documents for the Conventional Arms Exports working party include a notice of the meeting time and day, but no information about the content of the agenda. Thus, the Foreign Relations Counsellor group was selected instead. With respect to the sub-group of regional working parties, agendas for the Africa working party are only available since 2006, and for the Committee on Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management only since 2005. Thus, for these working parties, agendas from the years 2006 and 2005 are presented instead of agendas from the year 2004. These problems in the selection of working party agendas further illustrate the practical difficulties one would encounter in an attempt to measure political attention by coding the content of agendas. The agendas for a particular working party and year were retrieved through a search in the Council's register of documents. From the returned list of search results, the 5<sup>th</sup> agenda in the chronologically ascending list of agenda documents was selected. The search strings for the earliest year are documented below. By changing the number of the year in the search string, the results for the other years can be obtained.



## Examples of horizontal working party agendas: Foreign Relations Counsellors

Search string:

[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB\\_DOC=%3E0&DOT\\_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC\\_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC\\_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET\\_YEAR=2004&DOC\\_TITLE=counsellors](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB_DOC=%3E0&DOT_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET_YEAR=2004&DOC_TITLE=counsellors)

### 19 January 2004

1. Proxima - per diems
2. (poss.) FYROM visa ban: draft Council Common Position
3. RELEX/Sanctions draft mandate
4. Liberia: draft Council Common position; draft Council Regulation
5. Sudan: draft Council Regulation
6. Athena
7. Financing of exercises
8. A.O.B.

### 19 January 2009

1. FYROM: draft Common Position
2. European Security and Defence College: draft Decision
3. Update EUJUST LEX - Recruitment of short-term experts
4. EUPT Kosovo: briefing by HoM
5. Zimbabwe: draft Common Position
6. EUSR for Bosnia-Herzegovina: financial statement
7. EUSR for Sudan: financial statement
8. EUSR for the MEPP: financial statement
9. (poss.) EULEX Kosovo - Third Party Liability Insurance
10. A.O.B.

### 16 January 2014

1. EU SATCEN: Draft Council Decision
2. EU ISS: Draft Council Decision
3. (poss.) South Korea: draft FPA
4. Central African Republic: Draft Council Regulation
5. Liberia: Draft Council Decision and Regulation
6. (poss.) Tunisia:  
Draft Council Decision and Regulation  
Draft replies
7. International Code of Conduct on Outer Space Activities: Draft Council Decision
8. A.O.B.

## Examples of regional working party agendas: Africa

Search string:

[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB\\_DOC=%3E0&DOT\\_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC\\_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC\\_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET\\_YEAR=2006&DOC\\_SUBJECT=COAFR](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB_DOC=%3E0&DOT_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET_YEAR=2006&DOC_SUBJECT=COAFR)

### 29 March 2006

1. DRC
2. EU-Africa Ministerial meeting
3. SADC
4. Swaziland
5. Kenya
6. Uganda
7. Comoros
8. Madagascar
9. Burundi
10. AOB: ECOWAS

### 4 February 2009

1. Burundi
2. Madagascar
3. Somalia
4. Cameroon
5. A. O. B.

### 22 January 2014

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Somalia
3. Sahel (Delegates of the Mashreq/Maghreb Working Party are invited to attend this agenda item)
4. Senegal
5. Gulf of Guinea (doc. 18099/13)
6. Any other business

## Examples of CSDP working party agendas: Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management

Search string:

[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB\\_DOC=%3E0&DOT\\_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC\\_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC\\_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET\\_YEAR=2005&DOC\\_TITLE=civilian](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB_DOC=%3E0&DOT_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET_YEAR=2005&DOC_TITLE=civilian)

### 4 November 2005

1. Follow on to EUPOL Proxima in the presence of Police HoM Jurgen Schulz: Draft CivCom advice (doc. 13917/05)
2. EUJUST Lex review
3. Op. Althea Six Monthly review in the presence of members of EUFOR
4. Draft General Concept concerning the chain of payments project in DRC: Draft CivCom advice
5. Civilian Headline Goal
6. AOB

### 21 January 2009

1. EUJUST LEX: Presentation of the six-monthly report by the Head of Mission (doc. 5111/09 RESTREINT UE)
2. EUBAM Rafah: Discussion on draft Council Conclusions
3. Operations: EULEX Kosovo
4. EULEX Kosovo: Discussion on draft advice of six-monthly report 01/09 (doc. to be circulated)
5. Civilian Headline Goal 2010: Discussion on revised Capability Improvement Plan (doc. 5232/2/09 REV 2)
6. AOB.

### 22 January 2014

1. EUBAM Libya: Update on future HQ; Preparation of SR
2. Mental health care in CSDP missions: Discussion (doc. MD 03/14)
3. AOB.

## Examples of trade working party agendas: ACP

Search string:

[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB\\_DOC=%3E0&DOT\\_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC\\_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC\\_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET\\_YEAR=2004&DOC\\_TITLE=acp](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB_DOC=%3E0&DOT_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET_YEAR=2004&DOC_TITLE=acp)

### 3 February 2004

1. Zimbabwe: Commission proposal for a Council Decision extending the period of application of appropriate measures under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement (doc. to follow)
2. Amendments to the Cotonou Agreement: Commission proposal (doc. to follow)
3. Communication on the future development of the EU Water Initiative and the modalities for the establishment of a Water Facility for ACP countries (doc. 5757/04)
4. Any Other Business

### 20 January 2009

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda
2. Nomination of the Board Members of the CDE
3. (Possible) Conference on Culture and Creation as Vectors for Development - presentation by the Commission and exchange of views
4. Commission Staff Working Paper on the Review of the Governance Initiative - presentation by the Commission
5. EPAs
6. Zimbabwe
7. Revision of the Cotonou agreement - discussion on draft notification letter and mandate
8. Any other business

### 24 January 2014

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda
2. Draft Council Regulation on the implementation of the 11th European Development Fund
3. Draft Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation applicable to the 11th European Development Fund
4. EDF discharge procedure for 2012
5. Any other business

## Examples of development working party agendas: Development Cooperation

Search string:

[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB\\_DOC=%3E0&DOT\\_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC\\_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC\\_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET\\_YEAR=2004&DOC\\_TITLE=development](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?PUB_DOC=%3E0&DOT_CD=TX%7CCM&i=AGNDTXCM&ROWSPP=25&DOC_LANCD=EN&ORDERBY=DOC_DATE+ASC&typ=SET&NRROWS=5000&RESULTSET=1&TARGET_YEAR=2004&DOC_TITLE=development)

### 5 February 2004

1. Commission Communication + Staff Working paper: The World Summit on Sustainable Development one year on: implementing our commitments (doc. 5095/04 ENV 4 DEVGEN 2 ONU 2 + ADD 1); Presentation of WSSD Initiatives and further exchange of views
2. Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Regulation amending Council regulations (EC) n° 975/1999 and 976/1999 on the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law in developing countries and other third countries (doc. 15128/03 DEVGEN 152 COHOM 43 CODEC 1651); Exchange of views on further procedure
3. Follow-up to the GAERC Orientation Debate on the effectiveness of EU external assistance: progress report on the reform of the management of external assistance; Presentation by the Commission and exchange of views
4. Any other business.

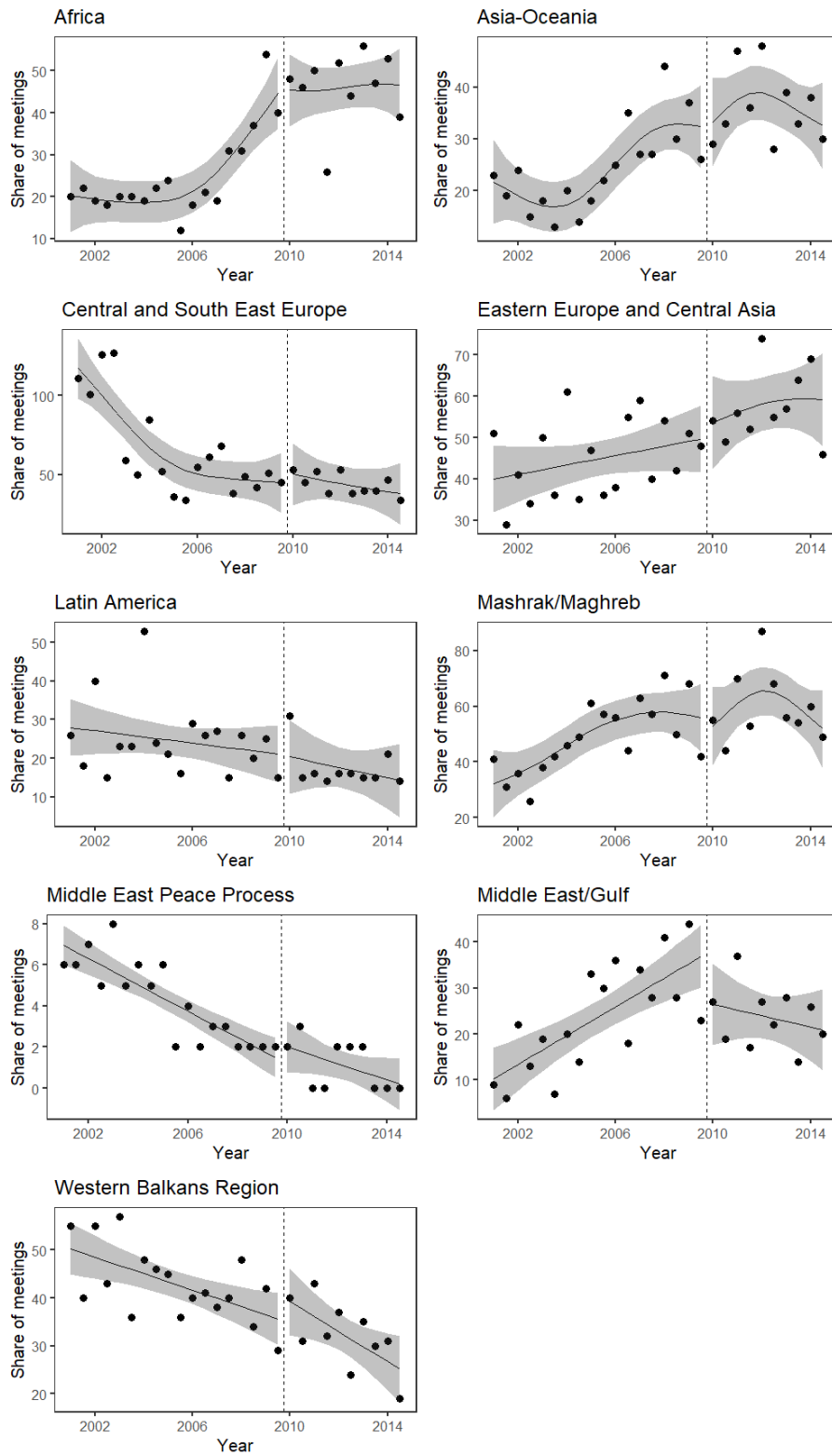
### 26 February 2009

1. Commission communication on an EU Strategy supporting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in developing countries: Presentation by the Commission and exchange of views
2. Impact of the financial and economic crisis on development in the context of the preparations of the G-20 Summit (London, 2 April 2009): Key development messages: discussion
3. Commission communication: Towards a comprehensive Climate Change Agreement in Copenhagen: Draft Council Conclusions: discussion
4. Any other business

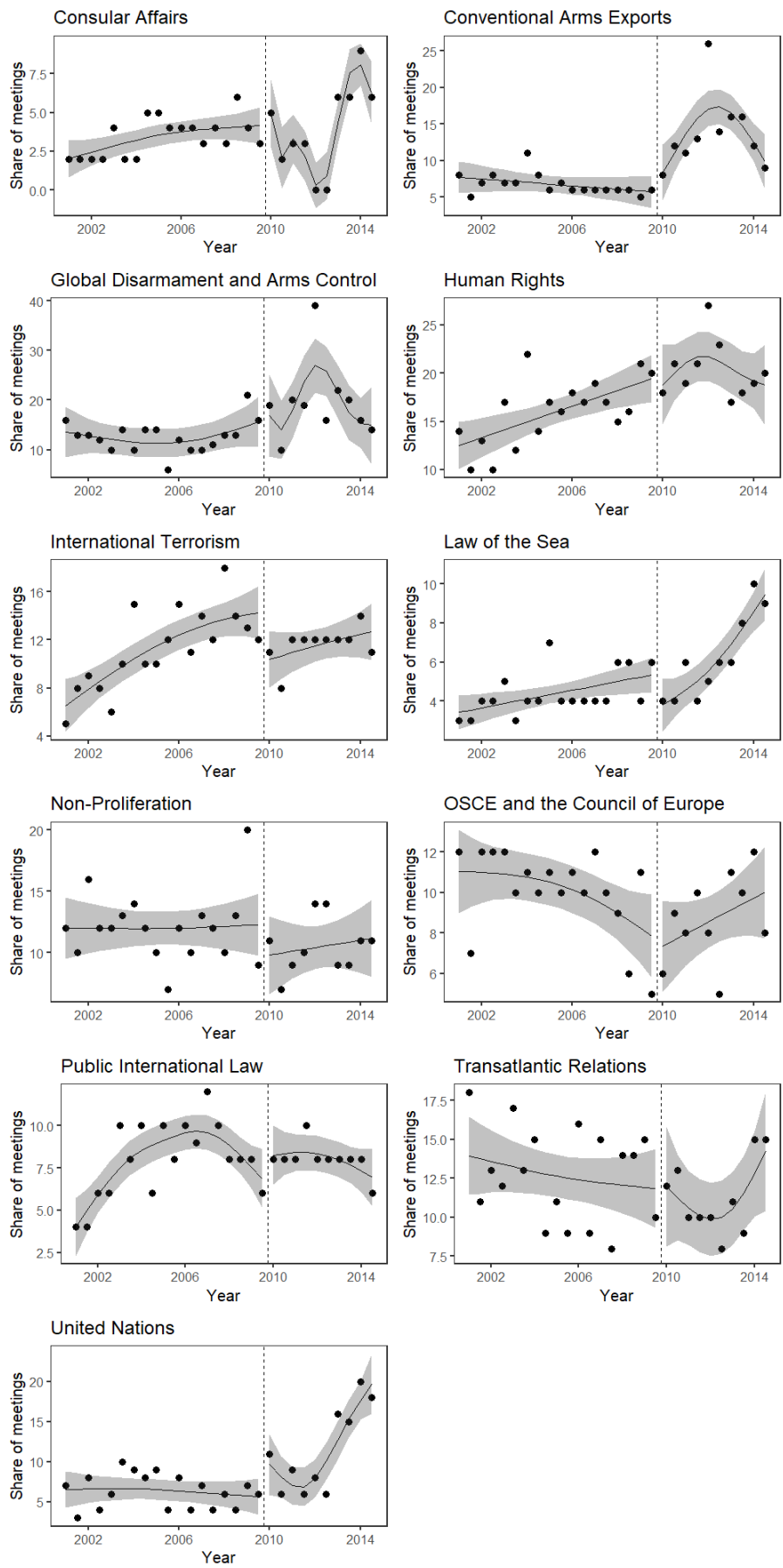
### 30 January 2014

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. (poss.) European Court of Auditors' Special Report on "EU Support for Governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo": draft Council Conclusions
3. European Year of Development (2015): 2nd technical trilogue meeting (28 January): debrief by the Presidency
4. A.O.B.

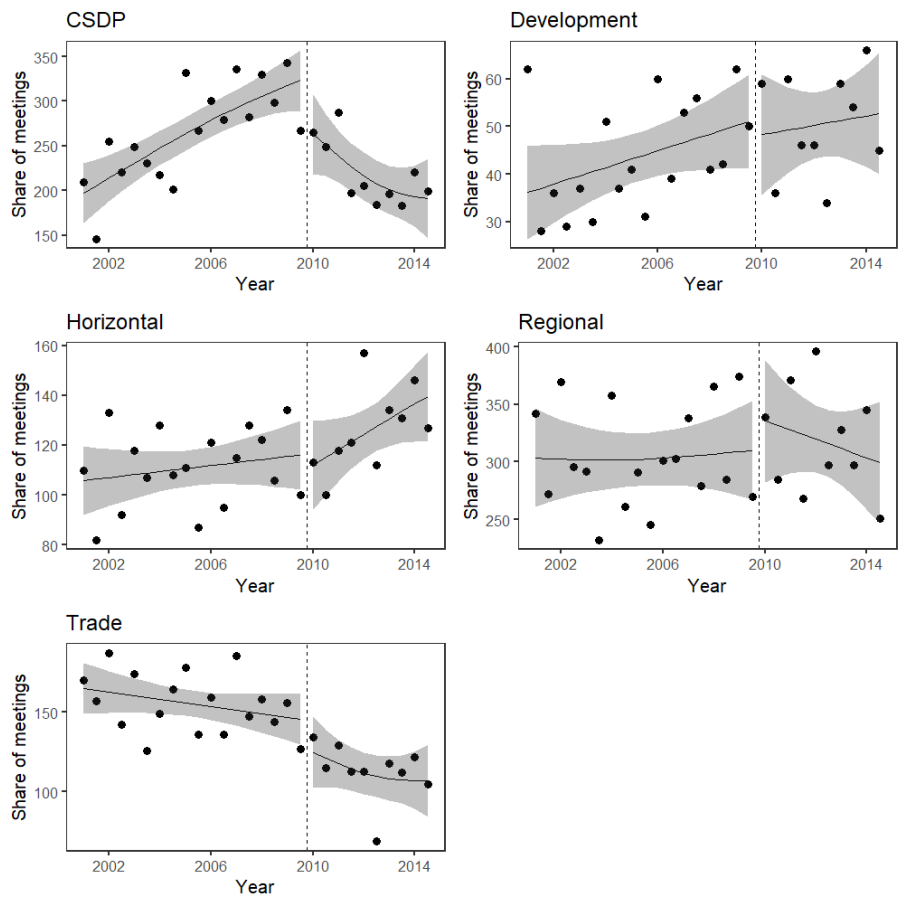
**Replication of Figures 3 to 5 with the number of meetings as outcome variable**



**Figure A1: Allocation of political attention to geographical areas over time, 2001-2014**



**Figure A2: Allocation of political attention to horizontal issues over time, 2001-2014**



**Figure A3: Allocation of political attention to foreign affairs sub-fields over time, 2001-2014**



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