A Political Disconnect?
Evidence From Voting on EU Trade Agreements*

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Abstract

It has long been argued that the European Union (EU) suffers from a "democratic deficit." The European Parliament (EP), the only EU institution directly elected by citizens, is seen as having limited powers. Moreover, its members (MEPs) are often portrayed as unresponsive to the interests of their constituents as a result of European elections being driven by domestic politics. In this paper, we provide evidence against these Eurosceptic arguments, using data on a key policy choice made by MEPs: the approval of EU trade agreements. First, we show that MEPs are responsive to the trade policy interests of their electorate, a result that is robust to controlling for a rich set of controls and fixed effects, and to employing an instrumental variable strategy. Second, counterfactual exercises demonstrate that the EPs' power to reject trade deals explains why only agreements that have broad political support among EU legislators reach the floor. Finally, against the idea that European elections are driven solely by domestic politics, we find that MEPs' re-election chances depend on the congruence between their trade votes and their constituency's trade interests.

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1 Introduction

Many studies argue that public engagement in democracies has declined over the last decades due to a growing disconnect between citizens and their representatives (e.g., Flinders, 2015; Foa *et al.*, 2016; Fisher, 2018). These views are also commonly invoked by populist politicians, who uphold a denigratory vision of elites and depict them as corrupt and detached from the people's wishes (e.g., Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022; Bellodi *et al.*, 2023).

The European Union (EU) is a prominent example of an institution seen as suffering from a "democratic deficit." A key argument is that the European Parliament (EP), the only EU institution directly elected by citizens, has limited powers relative to other EU institutions (e.g., Follesdal and Hix, 2006). Moreover, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are often portrayed in the media and the literature as unaccountable and unresponsive to the interests of their electorate.[1] Political scientists argue that this disconnect results from the second-order nature of European elections: instead of being shaped by EU policies, EU elections are fought in the shadow of (first-order) national elections (e.g., Hobolt and Franklin, 2011).[2] These arguments can have important political implications, as illustrated by the Brexit campaign.[3]

In this paper, we provide systematic evidence against these widespread Eurosceptic arguments. We first show that, far from being disconnected and unaccountable, MEPs are responsive to the economic interests of their electorate when voting on important EU policies. Second, we refute the argument that the only directly elected EU institution lacks real power and demonstrate that only legislation that has broad support among MEPs reaches the EP's floor. Finally, we show that MEPs' re-election probability depends on the congruence between their EU policy choices and their voters' interests. This contradicts the idea that EU elections are driven entirely by domestic politics within the Member States.

[1] See, for example, the article "Elected, yet strangely unaccountable" (*The Economist*, May 15, 2014). That said, the authors point out that "the desire for more democratic accountability has meant that every successive treaty has increased the European Parliament's powers. [...] As much as 90% of what the EU does requires the parliament's assent. And since the EU is involved in as much as half of all legislation in Europe, that makes the European Parliament more powerful than most national legislatures."

[2] Scholars also emphasize the low turnout and the lack of a common "demos" (shared interests and identity) (Weiler *et al.*, 1995). On the other hand, it has been claimed that European citizens have much in common — sharing similar constitutional and democratic principles — and that the EP features the same left-right divide that exists in all the member states (Hix, 2008).

[3] "Britain's self-ejection from Europe is the culmination not just of four months of heady campaigning but four decades of latent Euroscepticism. (...) It has become a tenet of Euroscepticism that the union is too remote from the people it is governing" ("How did UK end up voting to leave the European Union?" *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016). Figures A-2 and A-3 illustrate the coverage of the EU democratic deficit and Euroscepticism in the media and the academic literature over time. See De Vries (2018) for an extensive analysis of the different forms Euroscepticism can take.

Our analysis focuses on a key policy of EU legislators: the approval of EU trade agreements. Four main reasons justify this choice. First, the Common Commercial Policy is an exclusive competence of the EU, enshrined in Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Second, since the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, the entry into force of trade agreements requires the approval of the EP.[4] Third, while many studies show that trade shocks matter for politics (e.g., Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b; Autor *et al.*, 2020; Che *et al.*, 2022), the question of whether representatives' policy choices reflect the trade interests of their constituencies has received less attention. Finally, trade agreements are increasingly salient to EU citizens: the volume of internet searches on trade agreements, their coverage in the media, and the share of European political parties that mention trade policy in their electoral program have all increased significantly in recent years (see Figure A-1 in the Appendix).[5]

We construct a rich new dataset to study the determinants of MEPs' trade votes. This contains the roll-call votes on 16 free trade agreements (FTAs) signed by the EU since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, as well as a wide range of variables that may be shaping these votes. To capture the policy interests of MEPs' constituencies, we first compute the share of a region's employment in sectors that exhibit trade surpluses with the partner(s) of an FTA. This variable captures the extent to which workers in a region stand to gain or lose from a specific trade agreement.[6] Because EU elections are based on a proportional system, we aggregate export shares at the MEP-constituency level, using as weights the share of votes obtained by national political parties in the previous European election across different regions. We employ the same aggregation method to measure other socio-economic and political characteristics of an MEP's constituency (e.g., unemployment, education, ideological position, trust in political parties and EU institutions). We also collect systematic information about EU legislators (e.g., party affiliation, tenure, gender, age, domestic political career).

We find that European legislators respond to their constituents' interests when voting on trade agreements: MEPs representing constituencies with a higher share of jobs in export-

[4] "Mixed" trade agreements, which include provisions outside the EU's exclusive competences, must also be approved by the member states using national ratification procedures (see Conconi *et al.*, 2021).

[5] The salience of EU trade agreements is also apparent when considering the emergence of anti-trade movements. In Europe, they include the "Stop CETA and TTIP!" campaign organized during the negotiations with Canada and the United States or the 2024 protests against the EU-Mercosur agreement.

[6] Economists have long emphasized the gains in allocative and productive efficiency that trade integration can bring. However, an ample economic literature also points out that lowering trade barriers generates winners and losers, stressing the importance of mechanisms to compensate the latter to avoid the "backlash of globalization" (Colantone *et al.*, 2022).

oriented industries are more likely to vote in favor of a trade agreement. In terms of magnitude, our baseline estimates imply that a 10 percentage point increase in the bilateral export share raises the probability of a vote in favor of a trade agreement by 0.92 percentage points. Using data from Conconi *et al.* (2014), we find that MEPs are not significantly different from US legislators in terms of their responsiveness to the interests of their electorate when voting on trade agreements.

The results are robust to including a rich set of controls and different types of fixed effects (e.g., European political party, year, constituency, MEP). We also implement an instrumental variable (IV) strategy to address any remaining concerns about the endogeneity of the employment composition of local economies. Specifically, the instrument exploits data on the allocation of employment in non-EU OECD countries and is meant to capture exogenous industry shocks (e.g., technological shocks) that have shifted employment levels across sectors. The IV estimates support a causal interpretation of our baseline findings.

We interpret the positive effect of the export share on the probability of voting in favor of an FTA as evidence that MEPs are responsive to their constituents' trade policy interests. We rule out alternative explanations of our findings. We show that these are not explained by local favoritism (e.g., Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Burgess *et al.*, 2015): the probability that an MEP votes in favor of an FTA depends on the export share of his/her constituency, even when this is constructed excluding the region of birth or the region represented by the MEP in the national/regional parliament. We also rule out lobbying by private firms as a potential mechanism: while there is evidence that large firms dominate lobbying on trade policy (e.g., Kim, 2017; Osgood, 2017; Blanga-Gubbay *et al.*, 2024), our estimates are unaffected when we control for the presence of large firms in MEPs' constituencies.

As already mentioned, since the Lisbon Treaty, the EP plays a key role during trade negotiations: an agreement negotiated by the Commission and signed by the Council can only enter into force if the EP approves it; during the negotiation process, the Commission anticipates the need for parliamentary consent and works in close cooperation with the EP's International Trade Committee (INTA). The latter scrutinizes the Commission's work and co-decides on the legal framework.[7] As a result, agreements that reach the floor of the EP tend to pass by a large margin. Counterfactual experiments based on our model confirm the legislative powers of the EP. First, we use our estimates to predict how EU legislators would vote on EU-Mercosur, an agreement that was finalized in June 2019 but has not yet been

[7] See https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/inta/about.

presented to MEPs for approval.[8] Based on our estimates, the outcome of a vote would be a close call. This result can help explain why there has not been a vote on this agreement. Second, we explain why some agreements are not (yet) being negotiated. For example, our model shows that an agreement with China would be opposed by a wide majority of MEPs.[9]

Finally, we show that the probability that MEPs are re-elected at the end of a term depends on whether their trade votes are congruent with the trade policy interests of their constituency, i.e., they vote in favor (against) a trade agreement when the majority of their electorate is expected to gain (lose) from it. These findings imply that MEPs have a direct incentive to represent the interests of their constituency. They also go against the idea that European elections are solely driven by domestic politics.

Our paper contributes to two main strands in the literature. The first examines whether elected representatives are sensitive to the wishes of their electorate. This has been a central concern in normative democratic theory (e.g., Arrow, 1963; Sen, 1970). Several studies examine the relationship between public opinion and policies in the United States (e.g., Page and Shapiro, 1983; Stimson *et al.*, 1995; Lax and Philips, 2012). Some studies show that low clarity of responsibility and limited information imply that elected representatives are less responsive to public preferences (e.g., Besley and Burgess, 2002; Snyder and Strömberg, 2008). Notwithstanding widespread Eurosceptic arguments, little is known about the congruence between MEP's decisions and their voters' interests. A few studies examine votes in the EP before the Liston Treaty (e.g., Hix *et al.*, 2006; Hix and Noury, 2007).[10], while other authors consider votes in the European Council (e.g., Mattila, 2009; Hagemann *et al.*, 2016). We are the first to study MEPs' votes on trade agreements – a policy issue of exclusive EU competence, in which the EP has played a fundamental role since the Lisbon Treaty.

We also contribute to the literature on the political economy of trade policy. Most studies examine the role of lobbying by industries or firms (e.g., Grossman and Helpman, 1995; Kim, 2017; Blanga Gubbay *et al.*, 2023; Maggi and Ossa, 2023). Few studies examine the role of electoral incentives (e.g., Conconi *et al.*, 2014) and swing-state politics (e.g., Bown *et*

[8] See https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_3396.

[9] We can also use our estimates to predict how MEPs would have voted on trade agreements in our sample under a different distribution of export shares. For example, if we consider the trade agreement between the EU and Canada, a 50% decrease in the export share would lower the share of MEPs predicted to vote in favor of the agreement by 8.2% (from 0.61 to 0.56).

[10] In this literature, the closest paper to ours is Hix and Noury (2007), who study the determinants of MEPs' votes on six pieces of EU legislation on migration policy in the fifth European Parliament (1999-2004). They find that MEPs only respond to the economic interests of their constituents when voting on legislation directly related to the economic rights of migrants. We study votes on a different policy (the approval of trade agreements) during a different period (after the Lisbon Treaty, which greatly expanded the powers of the EP) and find systematic evidence that MEPs respond to economic interests of their constituents.

al., 2024). Much of this literature focuses on the United States. Data availability has so far prevented systematic work on European trade policy.[11] We overcome this limitation by constructing a large dataset of MEPs' votes on trade agreements. As discussed in Section 2, this requires collecting information from many different sources, many of which are in the official languages of the EU member states.

2 Data and variables

2.1 Geographic areas

NUTS regions The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) is a hierarchical system that divides EU countries into smaller regions for statistical purposes. The standard, first adopted in 2003, has been revised several times. We use the 2016 version. Furthermore, we only observe socio-economic outcomes at the second level of the NUTS classification (i.e., regions with a population between 800,000 and 3 million). Overall, we identify 262 NUTS-2 regions. Appendix A-2 provides additional information on the construction of NUTS-2 regions.

European constituencies While most EU countries operate as a single constituency, several member states have chosen to establish regional constituencies: Belgium, France (until 2019), Ireland, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom (until 2020). Figure A-7 in Appendix A-3 shows the EP constituencies in the seventh, eighth, and ninth legislature, respectively.

National constituencies Our analysis also uses data for constituencies in national parliaments. Most of the time, these constituencies are either contained within or overlap with a NUTS-2 region.[12] Table A-4 provides more information on the data used to construct the national constituencies in each EU member state.

[11] A few recent studies examine the trade shock driven by surging imports from China on political outcomes in the European Union (e.g., Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b).

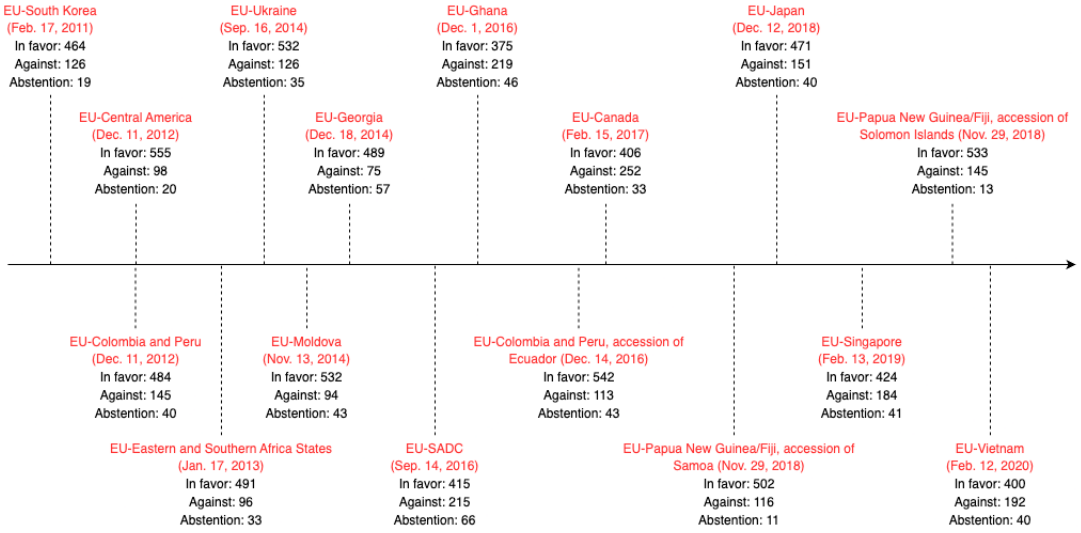
[12] Slovakia and the Netherlands elect their Parliament at the national level and do not have sub-regional constituencies. Five member states comprise only one NUTS-2 region (i.e., Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Malta). National constituencies in Slovenia are not perfectly contained within NUTS-2 regions and we could not create a corresponding crosswalk.

2.2 Roll-call votes on trade agreements

We use web automation to collect the official documents that report the outcome of all roll-call votes between 2009 and 2020.[13,14] We parse the documents and extract, for each agreement, the names of the MEPs attending the vote, their vote (i.e., in favor, against, or abstention), and their affiliation with a European political party.[15]

Figure 1

Roll-call votes on the approval of EU trade agreements



Notes: This figure shows the roll-call votes on the approval of FTAs included in our sample.

We restrict the analysis to post-Lisbon Treaty votes on the FTAs. Figure 1 shows the 16 FTAs included in our sample.[16] Overall, there is strong support for these agreements among MEPs (76.44% on average). This fact is in line with the overall support for free trade among EU voters during our sample period (see Figure 5). It also reflects the legislative power of the EP: when negotiating trade agreements, the European Commission works in close cooperation with the INTA committee, anticipating the need for consent of the EP; as

[13] We use the Python library *Scrapy* to iterate over all EP webpages that report roll-call votes. The scraper starts with the first sitting of the seventh legislature, which took place on July 14, 2009, and ends with the July 23, 2020 sitting of the ninth legislature. An example of a report can be accessed here.

[14] Our analysis does not include trade agreements that were voted by show of hands: Serbia (January 19, 2011), Papua New Guinea/Fiji (January 19, 2011), and Cameroon (June 13, 2013).

[15] We use the Python library *Pandoc* to convert the previously downloaded documents into a format compatible with the library *Beautifulsoup*. We use the latter to parse the documents and extract the necessary information.

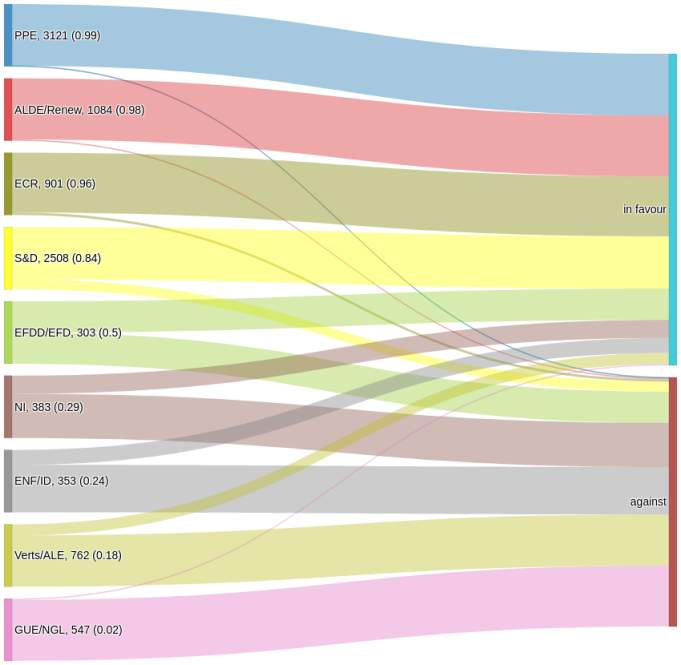
[16] We drop from the final sample MEPs who were elected in different countries during the sample period (2 MEPs), and MEPs who represented constituencies for which we lack data on covariates (4 MEPs). The final sample comprises 10,542 votes (580 of which were abstentions) and 1,715 MEPs (14 of whom always abstained).

a result, agreements put on the floor of the EP tend to pass by a large margin; as discussed in Section 3.5, counterfactual experiments suggest that only agreements that have broad support among EU legislators reach the floor of the EP.

MEPs tend to vote in line with their European political party. There are, however, deviations from the party stance, as Figure 2 illustrates.

Figure 2

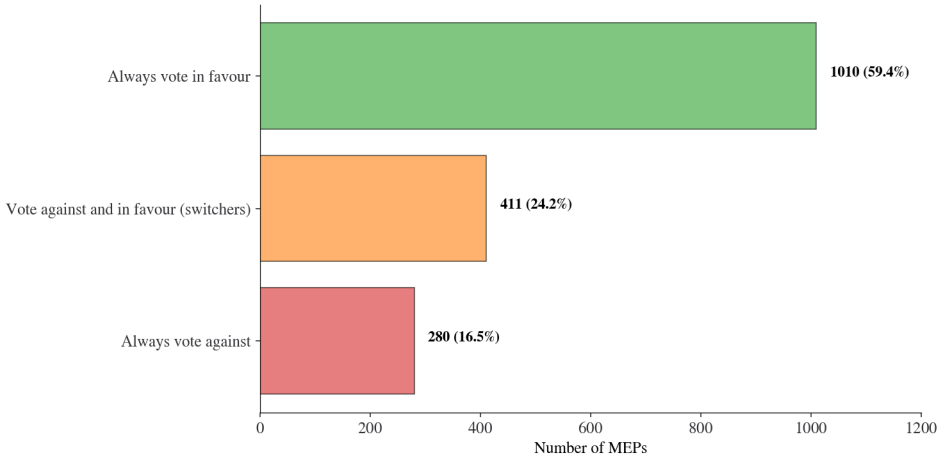
Roll-call votes on the approval of EU trade agreements
(variation within European political parties)



Notes: This figure shows the voting patterns of European political parties. The number next to the party name corresponds to the number of votes cast. The number in brackets indicates the share of votes in favor of trade agreements.

There is also variation in the voting behavior of individual MEPs over time: 1,010 (280) always voted in favor (against), while 411 voted both in favor and against different trade agreements during their EP mandate (see Figure 3). In our analysis, we will show that part of the cross-legislator and within-legislator variation in voting behavior reflects differences in the trade policy interests of the MEPs' constituents.

Figure 3
Roll-call votes on the approval of EU trade agreements
(variation within MEPs)



Notes: This figure illustrates the voting behavior of individual MEPs over time. We classify as switchers MEPs who voted both in favor and against different trade agreements.

2.3 MEP characteristics

We gather information on a number of characteristics of EU legislators. Table A-5 displays summary statistics for these variables.

We use Gender API, an AI-powered service, to obtain MEPs' gender.[17] We compute each MEP's age using information on their birth year, scraped from official EU websites. Information on legislators' tenure in the EP is taken from Michon and Wiest (2021).

We further use Michon and Wiest (2021)'s dataset to identify each MEP's place of birth, which we geocode using Google's API service. We then match the geographic coordinates of each location to a NUTS-2 region. For MEPs born outside the EU or representing a different country than the one where they were born, the city of birth is marked as missing. We further discard MEPs who are born in single NUTS-2 countries, as well as the 24 MEPs born in Ireland (NUTS-2 borders change over time) and the 5 MEPs born in Brussels (the region is split between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking constituencies). As a result, we only assign 1,468 MEPs to a region of birth. Table A-2 provides a breakdown of the number of matched MEPs by country.

We use different sources to identify the NUTS-2 region an MEP may have represented in their country's Parliament (see Section A-4 in the Appendix for more information). Specif-

[17] The service is available here. Given the MEPs' first and last names and the two-digit ISO code of their country of birth, Gender API returns a prediction for their gender together with an associated accuracy score. We also manually checked the results of the process.

ically, we scrape the official websites of each EU member state's electoral office to compile an exhaustive list of the politicians who ran for national parliaments since the late 1990s.[18] We find that 682 MEPs (i.e., 51.43%) ran in national elections. We use a matching algorithm to determine which MEPs won a seat in a general election. We find that 470 MEPs (i.e., 27.41%) were also national MPs. Their number increases to 543 (i.e., 31.66%) if we further include regional parliaments.[19] We trace the NUTS-2 regions that the MEPs ran to represent in national elections and, if elected, they represented in the national/regional parliaments. Similarly to the region of birth, in this exercise we drop MEPs elected in Ireland or representing the Brussels region.

2.4 Bilateral Export Share

To capture a constituency's preferences for an FTA with agreement partner a, we construct the variable *Export Share*$_{c(k),a,t}$, which measures the extent to which constituency c (in country k) can benefit from the agreement. Below we describe the procedure to construct this variable.[20]

Sector classification In the first step, we classify sectors into export-oriented or import-competing. To this purpose, we collect information on bilateral trade flows at the product level from the BACI dataset (Gaulier and Zignago, 2010).[21] We use correspondence tables to match HS 2007 six-digit product codes to two-digit sectors in the NACE Rev. 2 nomenclature.[22]

In a robustness check, we also use bilateral data for trade in services from the WTO-OECD Balanced Trade in Services (BaTiS) dataset.[23] Using these data is challenging, for

[18] When available, we use already existing election data from Kollman *et al.* (2019).

[19] We collect information on all member states with important regional parliaments (Belgium, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom).

[20] This variable is similar to the export ratio used by Conconi *et al.* (2012, 2014) to capture the trade policy interests of U.S. constituencies. The main difference is that our measure is constructed at the bilateral level, allowing us to study constituencies' preferences vis-à-vis specific trade agreements.

[21] The BACI dataset reports trade flows at the 6-digit level using the Harmonized System (HS) classification. It covers 230 countries and span the period from 2007 to 2020 using the HS 2007 version.

[22] Going from six-digit HS products to two-digit NACE sectors involves several steps. First, we match six-digit HS 2007 codes to their counterparts in the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) Rev. 3. The HS 2007 to ISIC Rev. 3 correspondence table is available here. We then use correspondence tables to go from the ISIC Rev. 3 to the ISIC Rev. 3.1, and from the ISIC Rev. 3.1 to the ISIC Rev. 4. Finally, we map ISIC Rev. 4 codes with 2-digit NACE Rev. 2 sector codes. The correspondence tables for the different ISIC revisions and from the ISIC Rev. 4 to the NACE Rev. 2 are available here. We use Malgouyres (2017)'s correspondence tables, which we match from HS1992 to HS2007 and NACE Rev. 1.1 to NACE Rev. 2, for the products that fail to be matched in the preceding steps.

[23] We use the version of the dataset released in 2021, which covers over 200 countries between 2005 and

two reasons: i) while data on trade in goods are collected through customs, data on trade in services are collected through surveys and are thus more likely to suffer from measurement error; ii) using these data requires manually matching services in the Extended Balance of Payments Services classification (EBOPS) to the NACE Rev. 2 sector classification, using the matching procedure described in Table A-4.

We use the trade data to define the indicator variable $X_{j,k,a,t}$, which is equal to 1 (0) if sector j is export-oriented (import-competing) for EU country k with respect to agreement partner a in year t. To identify comparative advantage sectors at the bilateral level, we measure per-capita net exports of EU member state k and agreement partner(s) a.[24] To this purpose, we first compute net exports:[25]

$$NX_{j,k,t} = \frac{Exports_{j,k,t} - Imports_{j,k,t}}{Population_k},$$

$$NX_{j,a,t} = \frac{Exports_{j,a,t} - Imports_{j,a,t}}{Population_a}.$$

Comparing net exports between countries leads to the following classification of sector j for country k in an FTA with a:

$$X_{j,k,a,t} = 1(j \text{ is export-oriented) iff } NX_{j,k,t} > NX_{j,a,t},$$

$$X_{j,k,a,t} = 0(j \text{ is import-competing) iff } NX_{j,k,t} < NX_{j,a,t}.$$

Figure A-4 provides examples for three manufacturing sectors, focusing on a EU member state (Germany) and an FTA partner (Vietnam). In sector C29 (motor vehicles), per-capita net exports of Germany are always higher than those of Vietnam, implying that $X_{j,k,a,t}$ is always equal to 1. In sector C14 (wearing apparel), per-capita net exports of Germany are always lower than those of Vietnam, and thus $X_{j,k,a,t}$ is always equal to 0. The third is an example of a switching sector, C13 (manufacture of textiles), in which per-capita net exports of Vietnam overtook those of Germany.

Tariffs Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/World Trade Organization (WTO) requires that preferential trade agreements negotiated by the European

2019. The most recent version is available here. We use linear extrapolation on the available service data to obtain trade flows for 2020 to match the period covered by the BACI trade data.

[24] For FTAs involving multiple partners, we construct $NX_{j,a,t}$ summing their trade flows and population.

[25] To account for potential measurement error and better gauge trends in trade flows, we fit linear time trends to imports and exports when constructing the variables $NX_{j,k,t}$ and $NX_{j,a,t}$.

Union and other developed countries must reciprocally eliminate "duties and other restrictive regulations of commerce" on "substantially all the trade" among members. The effects of an FTA between the EU and country a will thus depend on the level of tariffs that are eliminated by the agreement. Using data from the WITS-TRAINS database, we construct the following pre-agreement tariff variables:[26]

$\tau_{j,k}$: *average MFN tariff applied by the EU on imports of goods in sector* j,

$\tau_{j,a}$: *average MFN tariff applied by country* a *on imports of goods in sector* j.

These are the tariffs applied pre-sample (in 2008) by the EU and country a on imports from other WTO members under Article I of the GATT/WTO.[27] In some cases, these tariffs are actually equal to 0, e.g., for the EU in sector B05 (mining of coal and lignite) and for Singapore in C10 (manufacture of food products).

Sector employment We also collect data on employment in each region r. From the Eurostat's Structural Business Statistics (SBS) series, we obtain the number of persons employed in 67 two-digit NACE Rev. 2 sectors.[28] Because the SBS series does not report data for all sectors of activity, we also extract employment in ten aggregate sectors from the Labor Force Survey's (LFS) regional series.[29] We then apply two-digit SBS sector shares to LFS aggregates in order to harmonize the two datasets. Specifically, the level of employment in sector j in region r (in country k) is

$$L_{j,r(k),t} = \frac{L^{SBS}_{j,r,t}}{\sum_i L^{SBS}_{i,r,t}} L^{LFS}_{j,r,t}, \tag{1}$$

[26]The tariffs are expressed ad-valorem (i.e., as a percentage of value of the imports) and reported at the HS product-level. For FTAs with multiple trade partners, we compute the weighted average of the product-level tariff rates across partners in that FTA using GDP in 2008 as weights. To obtain a measure at the sector j level, we then take the simple average of the tariff rates across products that belong to j.

[27]For the Seychelles and Zimbabwe we use MFN rates from 2007, due to lack of data for 2008.

[28]The original dataset has a significant number of missing values (17.9%). Whenever possible, we use linear interpolation to fill in missing values, reducing the share of missing values to 1.7%. The results are robust to discarding missing observations.

[29]The LFS reports aggregate employment in agriculture, forestry, and fishing (NACE code A), industry (NACE codes B through E), construction (NACE code F), wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation, and food service activities (NACE codes G through I), information and communication (NACE code J), financial and insurance activities (NACE code K), real estate activities (NACE code L), professional, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support service activities (NACE codes M through N), public administration, defense, education, human health, and social work activities (NACE codes O through Q), arts, entertainment and recreation, other service activities, activities of household and extra-territorial organizations and bodies (NACE codes R through U).

where the summation is over all 2-digit SBS sectors contained within a given LFS sector. Overall, we compute employment for 67 two-digit sectors and four aggregate sectors.

Export share Region r's employment in export-oriented sectors that would experience tariff reductions in a following the entry into force of an FTA can be measured as

$$\Omega^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{j} X_{j,k,a,t} \times L_{j,r(k),t} \times 1\{\tau_{j,a} > 0\}. \tag{2}$$

Notice that the FTA can only have a positive effect on employment in export-oriented sector j if the pre-agreement MFN tariff applied by the FTA partner(s) a in that sector is positive (i.e., if $\tau_{j,a} > 0$). Similarly, region r's employment in import-competing sectors that would experience tariff reductions in k is equal to

$$\Omega^{M}_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{j} (1 - X_{j,k,a,t}) \times L_{j,r(k),t} \times 1\{\tau_{j,k} > 0\}. \tag{3}$$

Notice that the FTA has only a negative effect on employment in import-competing sector j if the pre-agreement MFN tariff applied by the EU in that sector is positive (i.e., if $\tau_{j,k} > 0$).

The trade policy interests of region r in the agreement with a are then captured by

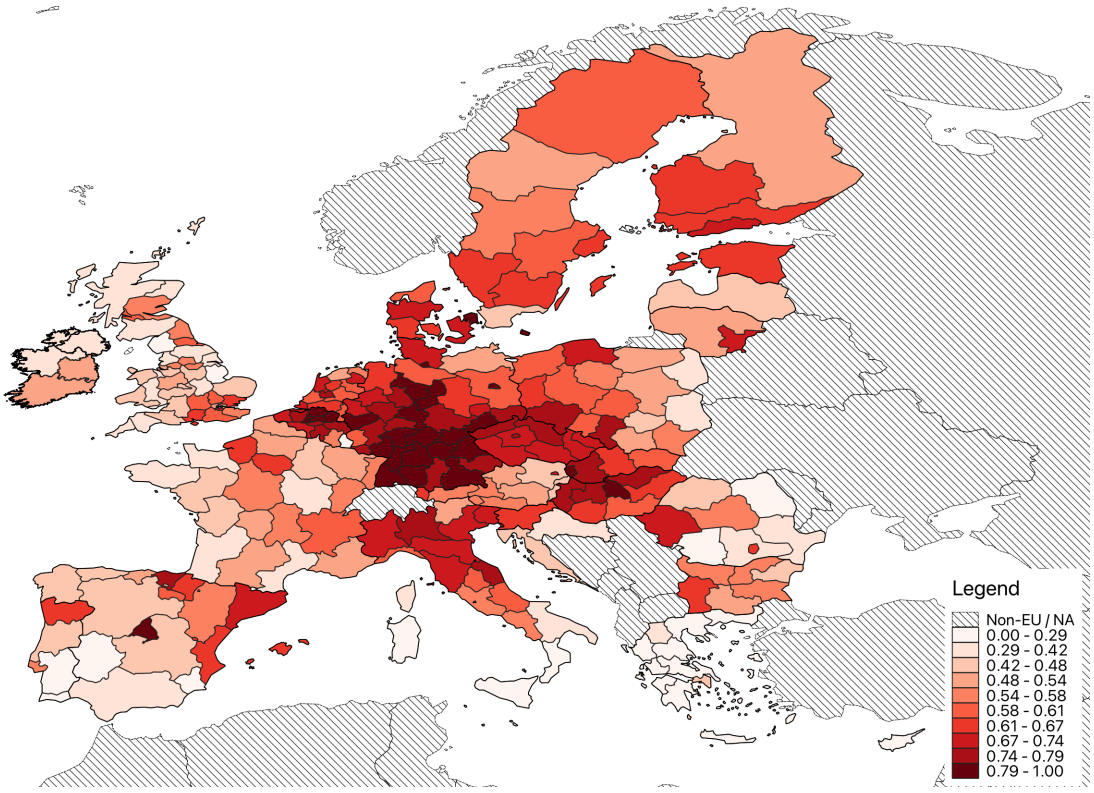
$$\textit{Export Share}_{r(k),a,t} \equiv \frac{\Omega^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t}}{\Omega^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t} + \Omega^{M}_{j,r(k),a,t}}. \tag{4}$$

The higher the $\textit{Export Share}_{r(k),a,t}$, the higher the share of jobs in region r that can benefit from an agreement with trading partner a.

As an illustration, Figure 4 plots the variable vis-à-vis Canada in 2016 (the year before the vote on the ratification of the CETA agreement). Brussels (BE10) and Berlin (DE30) are the two NUTS-2 regions with the highest export shares, while Luxembourg (LU00) and Peloponnese (EL65) are those with the lowest shares.

Figure 4

Regional variation in export share vis-à-vis Canada



Notes: The figure illustrates the variable *Export Share*$_{r(k),a,t}$ constructed for all EU NUTS-2 regions vis-à-vis Canada in 2016 (the year before the vote on the ratification of the FTA between the EU and Canada).

The next step is to define the relevant export share for EU legislators voting on trade agreement. Each MEP is elected in a EU constituency that includes one or more NUTS-2 regions. Given the proportional electoral system used in EP elections (see Table A-1), each constituency may be represented by multiple MEPs from different national parties. We would thus expect MEPs to be accountable to the supporters of their national party in the relevant constituency. For an MEP affiliated to national party np elected in EU constituency c voting on an agreement a in year t, the relevant export share should thus be:

$$Export\ Share_{np,c(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} Export\ Share_{r(k),a,t} \times \phi_{np,r(k),T}, \tag{5}$$

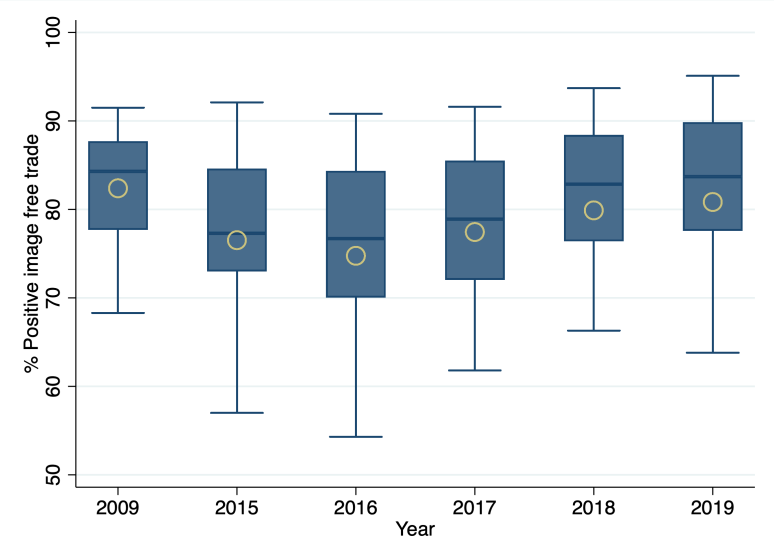
where $\phi_{np,r(k),T}$ is the share of votes obtained by national party np in region r in the European

election at the start of term T, in which the vote for approval of the FTA with a takes place.[30,31]

2.5 Trade opinions

We can use data from the Eurobarometer to create measures of citizens' overall preferences for free trade. Unfortunately, this data is not available at the bilateral level (i.e., for specific trade agreements). The Eurobarometer asks whether the words "free trade" bring to mind something very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative, or very negative. For each country k, we can construct the variable *Pro-Trade Opinions*$_{k,t}$ as the share of respondents for whom "free trade" conjures a very positive or fairly positive image.

Figure 5
Pro-trade opinions of EU citizens



Notes: The figure illustrates support for free trade among EU citizens during our sample period. The dot is the weighted (by population) average for the EU-28, the line in the box is the median, the sides of the box are the 25th and 75th percentiles, the two whiskers on the side are the highest and lowest value in each year.

[30]The share $\phi_{np,r(k),T}$ is computed using votes received by national party np across regions r that belong to constituency c: $\phi_{np,r(k),T} \equiv \frac{Party\ Votes_{np,r(k),T}}{\sum_{r \in c(k)} Party\ Votes_{np,r(k),T}}$.

[31]In the case of Ireland, we cannot compute the export share using equation (5) due to lack of party votes data at the regional level. For this country we compute the export share directly at the constituency level using equation (4) with employment for constituency c, $L_{j,c(k),t}$. As a result, the export share in Ireland takes the same value for all national parties np for a given constituency c and agreement a at time t.

The question about preferences for free trade is only asked in a select number of years during our sample period (2009 and 2014 through 2019). Figure 5 shows average support for trade among EU citizens for all years in which the data is available. This is the average of the variable *Pro-Trade Opinions*$_{k,t}$ across EU member states, weighted by population of the country. The weighted average support for free trade in the EU over the sample period is 78.63%, which is line with the share of votes cast in favor of trade agreements by MEPs (76.44%).[32]

2.6 Socio-economic and political controls

We construct a series of variables to control for socio-economic and political characteristics of EU constituencies that could affect MEPs' trade votes. Similarly to *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t}$ in equation (5), these variables are constructed combining regional data with the shares of votes obtained by national parties across different regions in the previous European elections ($\phi_{np,r(k),T}$). Table A-6 presents descriptive statistics of these variables.

For each constituency, we use Eurostat publications to measure the local supply of skilled labor as the share of residents who have completed some form of tertiary education. To capture the efficiency of labor markets, we compute unemployment rates. We also measure the share of households who live in cities, towns, and suburbs as a proxy for urbanization rates. In robustness checks, we control for the number of large firms in the constituency.[33]

We also use data from Eurobarometer to construct a series of political covariates. First, we compute a measure of the ideological positioning on the left-right political spectrum. Every Eurobarometer survey asks respondents to place their political views on a left-right political scale, with "1" denoting the most left-wing position and "10" the most right-wing position. For each constituency, we compute the average positioning of the people who answered this question. Second, Eurobarometer surveys track whether respondents trust political parties and the EU (among other institutions). We use the answers to this question to compute the share of individuals in a constituency who tend to trust political parties and the EU, respectively.

[32]The country with the lowest support for free trade is Austria in 2016, with only 54.3% of the respondents having a positive view, while Malta in 2019 has the highest approval rate at 95.1%.

[33]The data for these variables come from Eurostat's SBS at the country level. Firms are defined as large if they employ more than 250 (or more than 50) workers. Unlike the export share, this variable is constructed at the country level rather than at the national party-constituency level, and does not include data for three sectors: agriculture, forestry, and fishing.

2.7 Gravity variables

We use the Gravity database by Conte *et al.* (2022) to obtain information on trade partners in an agreement a (GDP, population, WTO membership) as well as bilateral characteristics between EU member state k and agreement partner a (distance, contiguity, colonial linkages, common language, diplomatic disagreement). Table A-7 displays summary statistics for these variables. All variables are constructed before the start of our sample period (in 2008).

Some of the gravity variables are continuous: GDP and population (which capture the economic and demographic size of a trade partner), distance (which measures the distance between the capital cities of countries k and a), and diplomatic disagreement (which measures political distance using UN votes). The remaining measures are indicator variables equal to 1 if: country k and the trade partner in a share a common border (contiguity); the country-pair has ever been in a colonial relationship (colonial linkages); if k and a have at least 9% of the population speaking the same language (common language); and if trade partner a is a WTO member (WTO membership).

For FTAs that include multiple trade partners (e.g., EU-Colombia and Peru) we aggregate data across partners to obtain agreement-level variables. For GDP and population, we sum values across all trade partners in an agreement. For the two remaining continuous variables (distance and diplomatic disagreement), we take the simple average over k and the trade partners in a. For the binary variables, we measure the share of trade partners for which the country-level binary variable is equal to 1.[34]

3 Are MEPs responsive to constituencies' interests?

3.1 Identification strategy

Regression model We study the responsiveness of MEPs to the trade policy interests of their constituencies by estimating the following logit model:

$$P\Big(Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}=1\Big)=F\Big(\beta_0+\beta_1 Export\ Share_{np,c(k),a,t-1}+\beta_2 Z_{i,t}+\beta_{3,t}Z_{np,c(k)}+ \\ +\beta_4 Z_{k,a}+\delta_t+\delta_{ep}+\delta_c+\varepsilon_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}\Big) \tag{6}$$

where $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$ is an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of

[34] We take the transformation using logarithm for GDP, population and distance after the aggregation of the variables at the a or k,a level.

agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. In the baseline specification, we disregard abstentions. Given that the dependent variable is binary, we estimate a standard discrete choice logit model (F denotes the cumulative standard logistic distribution). We report robust standard errors clustered at the MEP level in all specifications.

The main explanatory variable of interest is $\textit{Export Share}_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$, the export share of the national party of MEP i in the constituency in which he/she is elected relative to the partner(s) of trade agreement a, as defined in equation (5). We always use the value of this variable in the year preceding the vote to address concerns about reverse causality.

We address concerns about omitted variable bias by controlling for various characteristics (of the MEPs, their constituencies, and the trade agreements), as well as a rich set of fixed effects. $Z_{i,t}$ is a vector of MEP characteristics that include age, gender, and tenure in the EP. $Z_{np,c(k)}$ is a vector of socio-economic characteristics (the share of the population with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, the urbanization rate) and political characteristics (ideological positioning, trust in political parties, trust in the EU) of the constituencies. These variables are constructed using pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics, which are aggregated at the national party level using the shares of votes obtained by national parties across different regions in the previous European elections.[35] The socio-economic and political controls are interacted with year fixed effects. $Z_{k,a}$ is a vector of gravity controls set before the start of our sample period (in 2008), some defined at the a level (GDP, population, WTO membership), others at the k, a level (distance, contiguity, colonial ties, common language, diplomatic disagreement). The inclusion of year fixed effects (δ_t) accounts for time-varying macroeconomics and political conditions. Including fixed effects for European parties (δ_{ep}) allows us to control for their overall position with respect to trade policy.[36] Constituency fixed effects (δ_c) account for any unobservable time-invariant characteristic of EU constituencies that may affect their representatives' voting behavior on trade agreements. In robustness checks, we consider specifications that include MEP or FTA fixed effects, which respectively account for the role of time-invariant (observable or unobservable) characteristics of individual legislators and trade agreements.[37]

[35] For example, $\textit{Education}_{np,c(k)} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} \textit{Education}_{r(k),2008} \times \phi_{np,r(k),T}$. For ease of exposition, we omit the subscript T from the variable name.

[36] If we replace δ_{ep} with δ_{np}, the logit model does not identify the fixed effects for 161 of the 285 national parties due to lack of switchers. In turn, this results in a substantial reduction in the number of observations used for identification (6,621 instead of 9,848) in the specification of column 5 of Table 1.

[37] In the specifications that include MEP fixed effects, the vector of legislator characteristics $Z_{i,t}$ is dropped due to collinearity with the MEP and year fixed effects. The a-specific gravity controls are dropped when including FTA fixed effects.

Instrumental variable Despite including a rich set of covariates and fixed effects, we cannot rule out the possibility that export shares may be correlated with unobserved constituency characteristics that also shape MEPs' voting patterns. To address this concern, we adopt an instrumental variable (IV) approach. To understand our approach, recall from equation (4) that the export share of a region is constructed by combining three variables: $X_{j,k,a,t}$, which is used to classify an industry j as export-oriented or import-competing in the relationship between EU country k and FTA partner a; $L_{j,r(k),t}$, which measures industry-level employment in region r (in country k); and the indicator variables $1\{\tau_{j,k} > 0\}$ and $1\{\tau_{j,a} > 0\}$, which identify sectors in which the FTA would lead to tariff reductions (i.e., the EU and country a apply MFN tariffs different from 0). The tariff indicators can be taken as exogenous, since they are constructed using data on MFN tariffs (which apply to all countries) before the start of our sample period. As discussed below, one may instead be concerned about the other two components of the export share variable.

Concerning the industry classification, one potential concern is that the net export variables $NX_{j,k,t}$ and $NX_{j,a,t}$ used to define $X_{j,k,a,t}$ are based on aggregate exports and imports and thus include trade flows between between EU country k and country a, which may be affected by the entry into force of the FTA between them. To address this concern, we construct the indicator variable $\tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t}$ excluding trade flows between k and a.

The allocation of employment across sectors can be subject to local shocks, which MEPs may take into account when deciding whether to vote in favor or against a trade agreement. To address this concern, we follow an approach similar to Autor *et al.* (2013) and Colantone and Stanig (2018b) using data on evolution of employment allocation in non-EU OECD countries to capture broad trends in the global economy (e.g., technological shocks) that are unlikely to be correlated with local shocks in the EU. We restrict the analysis to Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States, for which employment data level are available from the International Labour Organization. For each region r (in country k), we construct the employment variable $\tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t}$ multiplying total regional employment ($L_{r(k),t} \equiv \sum_j L_{j,r(k),t}$) by the employment share of sector j in the non-EU OECD country that is closest to r in terms of pre-sample (2008) GDP per-capita.[38,39]

[38]Data on GDP per-capita of OECD countries (in USD) is from the World Bank. Data on GDP of EU-27 regions is from Eurostat, and for UK regions is from here. We convert EUR and GBP values to USD using annual exchange rates from Eurostat. We then obtain per-capita values using population data from here. For example, Northern Ireland (UKN0) and Cheshire (UKD6) are matched to Japan and Iceland, respectively.

[39]Sectoral shares for non-EU OECD countries and total EU regional employment are computed using tradable good sectors (i.e., from A to C33 of NACE Rev. 2).

We can then construct an instrument for the export share of region r (in country k):

$$\textit{Export Share IV}_{r(k),a,t} \equiv \frac{\tilde{\Omega}^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t}}{\tilde{\Omega}^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t} + \tilde{\Omega}^{M}_{j,r(k),a,t}}, \tag{7}$$

where $\tilde{\Omega}^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t}$ and $\tilde{\Omega}^{M}_{j,r(k),a,t}$ are defined as:

$$\tilde{\Omega}^{X}_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{j} \tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t} \times \tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t} \times 1\{\tau_{j,a} > 0\},$$

$$\tilde{\Omega}^{M}_{j,r(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{j} (1 - \tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t}) \times \tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t} \times 1\{\tau_{j,k} > 0\}.$$

Variation over time in the instrument comes both from changes in the allocation of labor across industries (i.e., $\tilde{L}_{j,r(k),t}$) and changes in the industry classification (i.e., $\tilde{X}_{j,k,a,t,}$).

As in equation (5), we use vote shares in the previous European elections to construct the instrument at the level of an MEP's constituency. For a legislator affiliated to national party np elected in constituency c, the IV for the export share of his/her constituency is:

$$\textit{Export Share IV}_{np,c(k),a,t} \equiv \sum_{r \in c(k)} \textit{Export Share IV}_{r(k),a,t} \times \phi_{np,r(k),T}. \tag{8}$$

Given that our baseline model features a non-linear outcome equation, we implement our IV strategy using a control function approach in a two-steps procedure. First, we estimate a linear regression of the potentially endogenous export shares on the instrument and the set of covariates and fixed effects. Second, we add the residuals from the first step to equation (6).[40]

3.2 Results

Table 1 reports the marginal effects of the export share on the probability of voting in favor of an FTA using a logit model (the corresponding results using a linear probability model can be found in Table A-8).

The point estimate in column 1 corresponds to the most parsimonious specification of equation (6), which only includes year- and European party-specific fixed effects. We find that higher export shares are associated with a higher probability of voting in favor of an

[40] In robustness checks, we estimate a two-stage-least-squares (2SLS) model in which we instrument export shares *Export Share IV*$_{k,a,t}$.

Table 1

MEP's votes and trade interests of their electorate

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.081***	0.080***	0.071***	0.075***	0.092***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.019)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.751	0.752	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

FTA. The specification in column 2 adds MEP controls. The marginal effect of the export share is similar in size to the estimate in column 1 and remains statistically significant. In column 3, we include pre-determined socio-economic controls that are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. In column 4, we further add pre-determined political controls interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Column 5 is our baseline specification, which controls for constituency-specific fixed effects, accounting for any time-invariant characteristic of an EU constituency that may affect the voting behavior of its representatives.[41] In terms

[41]Notice that the number of observations is smaller than in columns 1-4. This is because the logit estimator drops observations corresponding to three EU constituencies in Poland in which MEPs never switched position on trade agreements (Podlaskie and Warmian-Masurian, Pomeranian, Subcarpathian). In all specifications, the marginal effect of the export share is positive and statistically significant at the 1%.

of magnitude, our baseline specification in column 5 implies that a 10 p.p. increase in the export share raises the probability of a vote in favor of an FTA by 0.92 percentage point.

Table 2

MEP's votes and trade interests of their electorate (IV)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.098***	0.096***	0.076***	0.076***	0.114***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.027)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.751	0.752	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share estimated using an IV logit model and evaluated at sample means. In the first step, we regress *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ on *Export Share IV*$_{k,a,t-1}$, as defined in equation (8), and the remaining control variables specified in each column (the results can be found in Table A-9). In the second step, we use the residuals from the first stage as an additional control in equation (6). *Vote*$_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$ is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Our baseline specification includes a rich set of covariates and fixed effects in order to mitigate concerns about potential confounding factors. Nevertheless, the point estimates could still suffer from omitted variable bias if the variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ is correlated with other unobserved, time-varying constituency characteristics that also shape MEPs' votes on trade agreements. To address this possibility, we instrument export shares with the variable defined in equation (8).

The results reported in Table 2 confirm that MEPs are responsive to the trade policy interests of their EU constituencies. All marginal effects are estimated to be positive and statistically significant at the 1% level. We further conduct Wald tests to verify whether the coefficients underlying these effects are significantly different from their logit counterparts. We find that instrumenting the export share leads to point estimates that are not significantly different.[42] These comparisons suggest that our baseline estimates do not suffer from an omitted variable bias.[43]

3.3 Additional robustness checks

In this section, we discuss a series of additional robustness checks of Table 1. All the results are reported in Appendix A-7.

In Table A-11, we report results from conditional logit regressions that include MEP fixed effects. Their inclusion allows us to account for any characteristic of an EU legislator (e.g., ideology, background) that may affect their voting behavior on trade agreements. In these regressions, the coefficient on the export share is identified only by variation within the 411 MEPs who voted both in favor and against an FTA during their tenure in the EP (i.e., the switchers). Notice that the sample is significantly reduced as compared to Table 1. The coefficients on the export share remain positive and statistically significant at the 1% level. Kwak *et al* (2021) argue that the conditional logit estimator is not robust in setups where the conditional serial independence assumption is violated. In Table A-12, we re-estimate the specification with MEP fixed effects using a linear probability model. The point estimates remain positive and highly significant.

Table A-13 shows that the results also continue to hold when including FTA fixed effects to account for any agreement-specific variables that may affect MEPs' votes. Notice that in these specifications the a-specific gravity controls are dropped.

Another robustness check is related to abstentions, which are excluded from our baseline analysis. Our main findings are robust to including abstentions and coding them either as negative votes (Table A-14) or positive votes (Table A-15).

In our main analysis, the trade policy interests of a constituency are defined using only tradable goods (i.e., agriculture, mining, and manufacturing) for which more reliable trade

[42] We further compare the marginal fixed effects implied by the two sets of coefficients using the procedure described in Mize *et al.* (2019), reaching the same conclusion for all columns.

[43] We can also compare the coefficients in Table A-8, in which we estimate equation (6) using a linear probability model, with the corresponding 2SLS estimates in Table A-10. Wald tests reveal that the coefficients reported in all columns of these tables are not significantly different from each other.

data are available. As robustness check we construct the export share by considering also service sectors that can be traded internationally. As shown in Table A-16, the coefficient of *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ is significant in all specifications except when including constituency fixed effects. This is not surprising, given the challenges faced when using data on trade in services (see Section 2).

Finally, in Table A-17, we use citizens' stated trade opinions from the Eurobarometer survey to capture a constituency's trade policy interests. As mentioned in Section 2, data on trade opinions is missing for several years in our sample period. Moreover, the Eurobarometer survey is designed to guarantee a representative sample at the level of member state. We thus construct the variable *Pro-Trade Opinions*$_{c(k),t}$ at the level of each country k, using the share of respondents who expressed a positive view of free trade in the most recent available Eurobarometer survey. Notwithstanding the data limitations, the coefficient of this variable is always positive and statistically significant, indicating that MEPs vote in line with their electorate's trade preferences.

3.4 Ruling out alternative interpretations

Against widespread claims that European legislators are bureaucratic and unresponsive, the results above show that MEPs' votes on the approval of trade agreements are sensitive to the interests of their EU constituencies. In this section, we discuss and rule out two alternative interpretations of these findings.

Regional favoritism

A large literature shows that politicians tend to favor the regions to which they are attached (e.g., Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Burgess *et al.*, 2015). One may thus be concerned that, rather than responding to the interests of their EU constituencies, MEPs may be driven by the more "parochial" interests of some regions within them.

We first consider the region in which EU legislators were born. Anecdotal evidence suggests that MEPs' votes may reflect the interests of their city of birth.[44] We define the indicator variable *Birth*$_{i,r(k)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i was born in NUTS-2 region

[44] An example is Claudio Morganti, an MEP elected on the lists of the Lega Nord (part of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy party in the EP) who represented the Central Italy EU constituency between 2009 and 2014. After voting against the FTA between the EU and South Korea, he declared: "I come from Prato, a town that was once considered one of the most important textile areas in Europe. Today, unfair competition from Asia has turned it into a ghost town, because business in Prato has been utterly devastated" (from the minutes of the debate in the European Parliament on February 17, 2011).

r in country k, and 0 otherwise.[45] We can then construct the variable *Export Share*$_{i,a,t}$, which captures the interests of MEP i's EU constituency in an FTA with trading partner a, *excluding* his/her region of birth.[46]

Similarly, MEPs's votes may reflect the interests of some regions within their EU constituency to which they are politically attached.[47] As mentioned in Section 2, around 51% of MEPs in our sample ran in national elections and around 32% held seats in national or regional parliaments. To identify these legislators we define two indicator variables: *Candidate*$_{i,r(k)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i ran to represent represent region r in the national parliament in country k; and *Elected*$_{i,r(k)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i represented region r in the national/regional parliament in country k. We can then construct versions of the variable *Export Share*$_{i,a,t}$ that capture the trade policy interests of MEP i's EU constituency, *excluding* those of the region the legislator ran to represent/represented in the domestic political arena.

Table A-18 shows that the results of Table 1 are not driven by the "parochial" interests of some regions within the MEPs' constituencies. Column 1 of this table reproduces our baseline specification of column 5 of Table 1 using the version of the export share variable that excludes the region of birth of the MEP. Column 2 (column 3) excludes the region which the MEP ran to represent in national elections (represented in the national or regional parliament). The coefficient of *Export Share*$_{i,a,t-1}$ is always positive and significant at the 1% level, indicating that our baseline findings are not driven by regional favoritism.

Lobbying by large firms

Another possible concern is that our results could be driven by pressure from lobby groups. Several studies show that large firms dominate lobbying on trade policy (e.g., Kim 2017;

[45] As mentioned in Section 2, this variable can only be defined for 1,468 MEPs. In this exercise, we do not consider MEPs from countries that are not divided into at least two NUTS-2 regions. Because of NUTS-2 border changes, we also discard Slovenia and Ireland. We also remove observations for MEPs born in Brussels (NUTS-2 BE10) since this region is split between constituencies. Lastly, we drop from the sample MEPs born in a different country than the one they represent in the EP.

[46] The region of birth of an MEP is usually contained in his/her EU constituency. Notice that this is always true for countries that have a single EU constituency; for the other countries, it is true in around 65% of the cases. Going back to the example of Claudio Morganti, his region of birth (ITI1) is contained in the EU constituency he represented in the European Parliament (Central Italy).

[47] As an example, Esteban González Pons (an MEP from Spain since 2014, who previously represented Valencia in the Spanish parliament) declared after voting against FTA with South Africa: "I am pleased to say that all the Valencian MEPs voted against the agreement with South Africa. And, I would add that *in all matters that affect us, the MEPs representing the Valencian Community have always voted putting the interests of the people of Valencia before those of our parties.*" (interview for Valencia Plaza on 16/05/2019, translated from original language).

Osgood, 2017; Blanga-Gubbay *et al.*, 2024). These studies exploit detailed information available under the US Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), which requires individuals and organizations to file semi-annual reports providing detailed information on their lobbying activities at the federal level.[48]

Unfortunately, lobbying data in the EU is much more limited.[49] Nevertheless, we can check whether our results are robust to controlling for the number of large firms in MEPs' constituencies. Table A-19 shows that our results are unaffected when we account for the presence of large firms.

3.5 Counterfactuals

In this section, we use our baseline estimates from column 5 of Table 1 to carry out two sets of counterfactual exercises. The first consists at looking at the effects of shocks to the export share variable on the predicted probability that MEPs vote in favor of trade agreements already in our sample, i.e., those that have been negotiated and have reached the ratification phase. In a second set of counterfactuals, we use our estimates to predict the vote of MEPs on agreements that are not in our sample, either because they have been negotiated but have not yet been put forward for ratification in the EP or because they have not been negotiated.[50]

In the first exercise, we consider the 16 trade agreements in Figure 1. For each trade agreement and MEP, we use the estimated parameters to predict the probability that the legislator votes in favor of the agreement if the export share of his/her electorate vis-à-vis the FTA partner is as observed in the data or subject to a negative shock, holding all the remaining variables constant. Then, aggregating over the all MEPs, we can compute the expected outcome of a vote on the agreement by the European Parliament. This exercise allows us to quantify by how much the support for an FTA would fall in the face of a negative trade shock. For example, in the case of the CETA agreement between the EU and Canada,

[48]Lobbyists must disclose all their expenditures and the specific policy issues targeted. Lobbying activities encompass all efforts to influence the thinking of legislators or other covered federal officials for or against a specific cause. As stated in the LDA, they include lobbying contacts and efforts in support of such contacts, preparation and planning activities, research, and other background work.

[49]The EP, the EU Council, and the European Commission have adopted an inter-institutional agreement to make certain activities of interest representation conditional upon registration. However, this agreement does not have a formal basis in EU treaties and the registration itself remains voluntary, limiting the collection of systematic data on efforts to influence EU institutions.

[50]In both types of counterfactuals we exclude abstentions, computing predicted probabilities only for MEPs who have cast a vote. We also exclude MEPs from constituencies without switchers (see footnote 41), for which we cannot compute predicted probabilities.

we find that a 20% (50%) decrease in *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ for all MEPs is associated with a 2 (5) percentage point decrease in the share of votes in favor. Given a share of expected votes in favor of 0.61 in the absence of a shock, this implies a 3.28% (8.20%) fall in support for the agreement.[51] Considering the expected number of MEPs voting in favor, a 20% (50%) reduction in the export share would lead 13 (34) MEPs to switch from a positive to a negative vote.

The second type of counterfactual exercise shows that MEPs' power to reject trade deals explains why only agreements that have broad political support reach the floor of the EP. We use our baseline estimates to compute the expected outcome of counterfactual votes on two agreements that have not been voted by MEPs: EU-Mercosur, which has been finalized in June 2019 but has not yet been put on the floor of the EP for approval; and EU-China, which has not been negotiated. For this exercise, we consider the MEPs who voted on the agreement between EU-Vietnam, which is the last one in our sample, and has been approved by a large margin.[52] To predict their votes on EU-Mercosur and EU-China, we use the relevant values of the gravity controls and of the variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$. Figures A-5 and A-6 show the share of expected votes in favor of these agreements, for each EU member state. For EU-Mercosur, we predict 321 votes in favor and 264 against. This vote outcome is much closer than for EU-Vietnam, which may help explain the delay in ratification. For EU-China, we predict a rejection with 303 votes against and 282 in favor, which helps to explain why the agreement is not under negotiation. These results go against the argument that the EP lacks real power: only legislation that has broad support among MEPs reaches the floor of the EP.

3.6 Comparison with US votes on trade agreements

It is interesting to compare the voting behavior of EU legislators with that of US legislators, who are rarely accused of suffering from a "democratic deficit". To this purpose, we use data from Conconi *et al.* (2014) on the approval of trade agreements in the US Congress. They construct a variable to capture the trade preferences of the constituency (state or congressional district) of each legislator (senator or House representative). *Export Share*$_{c,t}$ is the share of jobs in export-oriented sectors in constituency c. There are two main differences

[51] For other agreements, the predicted effect of a negative shock is smaller. For example, in the case of the FTA between the EU and Vietnam, a 20% (50%) decrease in *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ for all MEPs would decrease the average predicted probability of a vote in favor from 0.67 to 0.66 (0.64).

[52] This agreement was approved with 400 votes in favor and 192 against. For 7 MEPs, we cannot predict the probability of a vote in favor due to lack of within-constituency variation.

between this variables and the variable constructed for EU legislators. First, MEPs are elected based on a proportional system, which explains why we take into account the vote shares of their national party when constructing the export share of the electorate (see equation (4)). By contrast, US legislators are elected based on a majoritarian system and thus directly represent their state or congressional district; we thus do not need to weight the preferences of their electorate by their party's vote share. Second, while we classify sectors into export-oriented versus import-competing based on a bilateral comparison of net exports, Conconi *et al.* (2014) use overall trade flows.

Table A-20 in the Appendix report regressions results for US trade votes (column 1) and EU trade votes (column 2). In all columns, we include legislator-level controls, fixed effects for their parties and their constituency, as well as agreement fixed effects.[53] The results for US and EU trade votes are qualitatively and quantitatively similar: the estimates in column 1 (2) implies that a 10 p.p. increase in the export share of a US state (EU constituency) increases the probability that its representative votes in favor of a trade agreement by 1.28 (0.93) percentage points.

4 MEPs' accountability and re-election

The results presented in the previous section show that European legislators respond to the trade policy interests of their electorate when voting on the approval of trade agreements. In this section, we show that MEPs' re-election probability depends on whether their trade votes are congruent with the trade policy interests of their electorate.

To this purpose, we construct a measure of congruence between an MEP's trade votes and the trade policy interests of his/her electorate. We proceed in three steps. First, for each MEP elected for national party np in constituency c of country k, we define the indicator variable $\textit{Pro-Agreement}_{np,c(k),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if $\textit{Export Share}_{np,c(k),a,t} \geq 0.5$, i.e., if at least 50% of the electorate is employed in industries classified as in export-oriented in the agreement with country a. Second, we define the indicator variable $Congruent_{i(np,c(k)),a}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i voted in favor of (against) the agreement and $\textit{Pro-Agreement}_{np,c(k),a,t}$ =1 ($\textit{Pro-Agreement}_{np,c(k),a,t}$ =0). Finally, by aggregating across the votes cast during EP term

[53]The MEP controls used in our baseline specification (gender, age and tenure) are also available for US legislators. The dataset from Conconi *et al.* (2014) does not include the socio-economic and political controls for legislators' constituencies and the FTA-specific gravity variables. To obtain comparable estimates, we thus exclude constituency controls and replace the gravity variables with FTA fixed effects. In column 1 (2), the agreement fixed effects are defined at the FTA-chamber (FTA) level, given the bicameral (unicameral) structure of the US Congress (EP).

T, we obtain the indicator variable $Congruent_{i,T}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i voted in line with his/her electorate's interests at least once during that term.

Anectotal evidence suggests that congruence may increase MEPs' re-election chances. As an example, consider two Italian MEPs who were elected from the Democratic Party during the 7th term (2009-2014): Sergio Cofferati (elected in the North West) and Mario Pirillo (elected in the South). The variable $Congruent_{i,T}$ is equal to 1 for Cofferati, who voted on the approval of four FTAs in the term, always in line with his electorate's interests: he voted in favor of all agreements and the export share of his electorate was always around 0.60. By contrast, $Congruent_{i,T}$ is equal to 0 for Pirillo, who voted on the approval of three FTAs, always against his electorate's interests: he voted twice (once) in favor (against) of the agreement when the export share of his electorate was < 0.5 (≥ 0.5). Both legislators ran for re-election at the end of 7th term, but only Cofferati kept his seat in the EP.[54]

To systematically assess whether MEPs' voting behaviour affects their re-election, we estimate the following logit model:

$$P(Re\text{-}elected_{i(ep,np,c(k)),T} = 1) = F\big(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Congruent_{i,T} + X_{i,T} + X_{c(k),T} + \delta_T + \delta_{ep} + \delta_{c(k)} + \varepsilon_{i(ep,np,c(k)),T}\big). \tag{9}$$

The dependent variable is an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i elected from national party np in constituency c of country k during EP term T is re-elected at the end of this term. The key explanatory variable of interest is $Congruent_{i,T}$ defined above, which captures whether MEP voted in line with his/her electorate's interests. The MEP controls include gender, age, and tenure and are constructed for the last year of term T. The socio-economic and political constituency controls ($X_{c(k),T}$) are instead constructed as the average over the term. We include fixed effects for EP terms (δ_T), EP parties (δ_{ep}) and constituencies ($\delta_{c(k)}$).

The results of estimating equation (9) are reported in Table 3. Notice that, as soon as we control for some constituency controls, the coefficient of the variable $Congruent_{i,T}$ is positive and significant, indicating that MEPs' have higher chances to be re-elected at the end of a term when their voting behavior on the approval of EU trade agreements is in line with their electorate's trade policy interests.

These findings suggest that voters are retrospective: if they were forward looking, their decisions should not be affected by past policy choices of their representatives. Recall also that the trade agreements that end up being voted in the EP have large political support (the average predicted probability of a vote in favor is around 0.75 across all specifications of Table 1). In this setting, the policy outcome (i.e., whether or not an agreement enters into force) does not depend on the voting

[54] See here for the results of the elections.

decisions of individual MEPs. Our results thus suggest that voters are not fully rational, i.e., they care about the voting behavior of their representatives even if its has no impact on policy outcomes. For example, voters may have reciprocal preferences, i.e., may want to reward politicians who have been kind to them, and to punish politicians who have been unkind to them (e.g., Hahn, 2009; Finan and Schechter, 2012; Conconi *et al.*, 2017).

Table 3
MEP's accountability and re-election

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
$Congruent_{i,T}$	0.055	0.067*	0.070**	0.087**
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.040)
MEP controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	Yes	Yes
EP Term FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	1,609	1,609	1,609	1,609
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is an indicator variable equal to 1 if MEP i elected from national party np in constituency c of country k during EP term T is re-elected at the end of this term. $Congruent_{i,T}$ is an indicator variable capturing whether MEP i trade votes during term T are in line with his/her electorate's interests. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP (measured at the end of term). The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate (average across the term). The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU (average across the term). Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

The results of Table 3 provide further evidence against widespread arguments that EU legislators are not accountable due to the second-order nature of European elections, which are fought in the shadow of main (first-order) national elections (Hobolt and Franklin, 2011). Our findings show that MEPs' votes on trade agreements, a policy of exclusive competence of the EU, affect the outcome of European elections.

5 Conclusions

Much of what the EU does requires the approval of the EP, whose members are directly elected by European voters. MEPs are often portrayed as powerless and disconnected from their electorate,

as a result of European elections being driven by domestic politics. These Eurosceptic arguments are widespread in the media and in scholarly debates and have played an important role in the Brexit campaign. They are also an integral part of the populist rhetoric.

In this paper, we provide three sets of results against these arguments, focusing on a key policy choice made by MEPs: the approval of EU trade agreements. We construct a novel dataset of MEPs' roll-call votes on 16 trade agreements negotiated by the EU since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. We collect systematic information on the trade policy interests of MEPs' constituencies and other variables that may affect their voting behavior, some defined at the MEP level (e.g., party affiliation, tenure, gender, age, domestic political career), others at the constituency level (e.g., unemployment, education, ideological position, trust in political parties and EU institutions).

We first show that, rather than being disconnected and unaccountable, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are responsive to the economic interests of their electorate when making decisions on key EU policies. We find that MEPs who represent constituencies with a higher share of jobs in export-oriented industries are more likely to vote in favor of trade agreements. The results are robust to controlling for a rich set of covariates and different types of fixed effects. They also continue to hold when we use an instrument for the trade policy interests of their electorate. We rule out alternative explanations for our findings on MEPs trade votes. In particular, we show that our results are not driven by the more "parochial" trade policy interests of some regions (those in which MEPs were born or which they have represented in national/regional parliaments) or by the presence of large lobbying firms in their EU constituencies. When comparing the voting behavior of MEPs with that of members of the US Congress, we find that the effects are qualitatively and quantitatively similar.

Second, we carry out counterfactual exercises which suggest that the EP plays a key role in the negotiations of EU trade agreements. We use our estimates to predict how MEPs would vote on agreements that are not in our sample (because they have been negotiated but not yet been put forward for ratification in the EP, or have not been negotiated). The results suggest that the EP's power to reject trade deals negotiated by the European Commissions implies that only agreements that have broad political support among MEPs reach the ratification stage.

Finally, we show that MEPs' re-election probability depends on the extent to which their policy choices are congruent with their voters' interests, which goes against the idea that European elections are driven by domestic politics within member states.

Overall, our analysis provides evidence against the idea that the EU suffers from a democratic deficit. In our analysis, we have focused on one of the policy areas exclusively set at the EU level.[55] An important avenue for future research is to study whether MEPs are equally responsive to their constituencies' interests when deciding on policies that are not of exclusive competence of the EU

[55] See https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/role-european-commission/law/areas-eu-action_en.

(e.g., migration, environment). One could also exploit the fact that many trade agreements cover policies that are outside the EU's exclusive competencies (e.g., investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms). These trade agreements are considered "mixed" and must be ratified following not only the procedures set out in the EU treaties (Article 218 TFEU) but also the national ratification procedures of the member states. These are extremely complex, as they may require the approval of all member states in their national parliaments, as well as regional parliaments in the case of Belgium (see Conconi *et al.*, 2021). It would be interesting to collect data on these votes and compare the responsiveness of EU and national legislators to their constituencies' interests.

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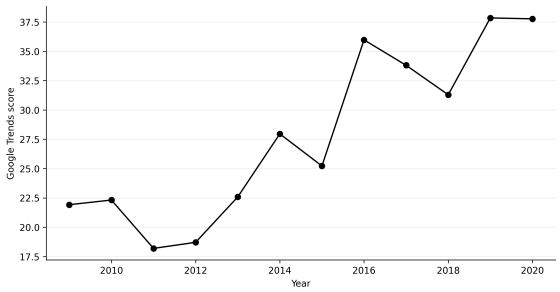
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Appendices

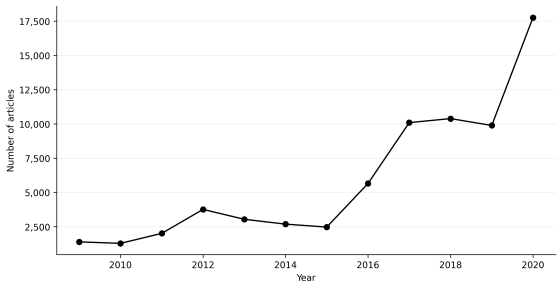
A-1 Figures

Figure A-1
Salience of trade policy

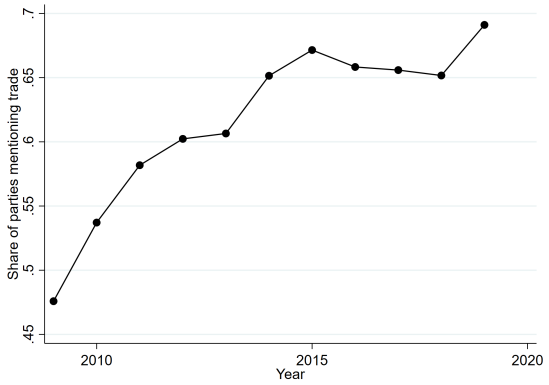
(a) Internet searches on trade agreements (Google Trends)



(b) Media coverage of trade agreements (Factiva)



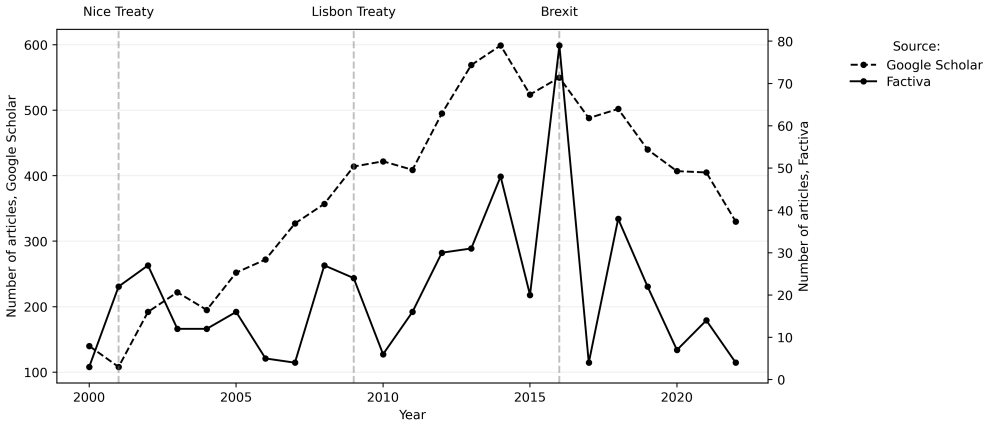
(c) Coverage of Trade in Parties' Manifestos (Manifesto Project)



Notes: Panel (a) reports the volume of internet searches on trade agreements in EU member states. This is a weighted average of the yearly Google Trends score for each member state (using population as weights). Panel (b) shows the media coverage of trade agreements in EU member states, using data from Factiva. Panel (c) plots the share of European political parties that mention trade in their electoral program, using data from the Manifesto Project. This figure is constructed using information on the trade-related codes of the Manifesto Project (406 and 407). To smooth electoral cycles, we report the 5-years moving average of the share of European parties that mention trade in their program.

Figure A-2

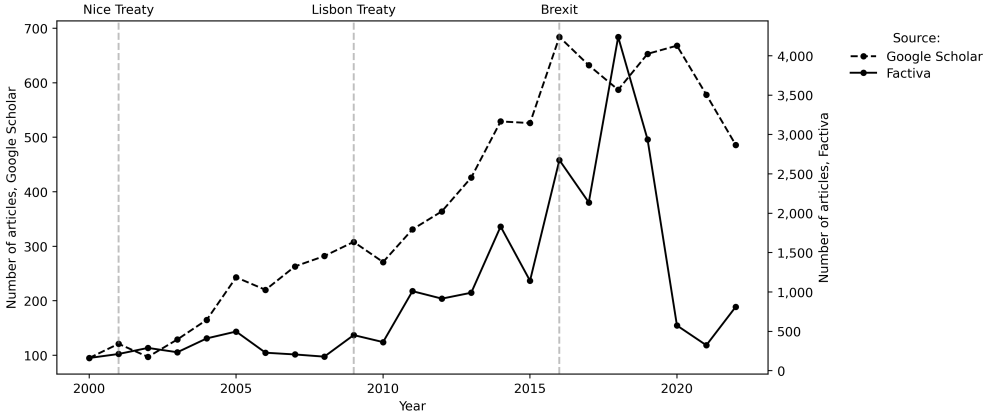
Articles on the democratic deficit of the EU



Notes: This figure shows the number of articles on Google Scholars and Factiva mentioning at least one of the following phrases: "Democratic deficit of the EU", "Democratic deficit in the EU", "EU democratic deficit", "Democratic deficit of the European Union", "Democratic deficit in the European Union" or "European Union democratic deficit".

Figure A-3

Articles on Euroscepticism

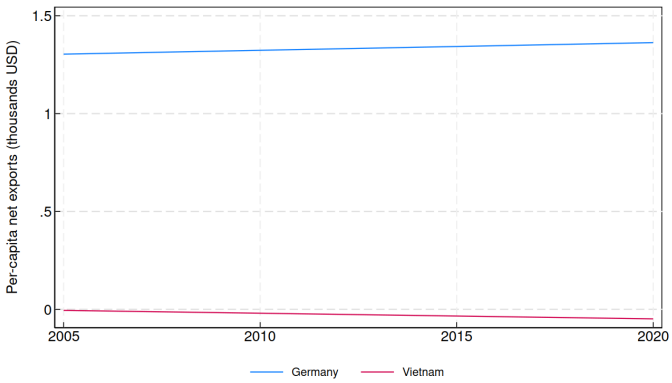


Notes: This figure shows the number of articles on Google Scholars and Factiva mentioning at least one of the following phrases: "Euroskeptic", "Euroskepticism", "Euro-skeptic" or "Euro-skepticism".

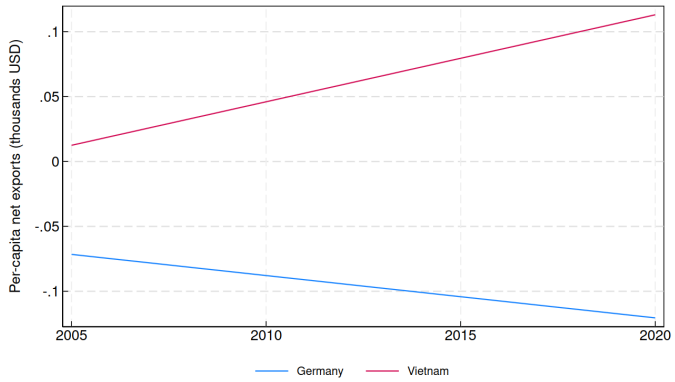
Figure A-4

Classifying industries - three examples

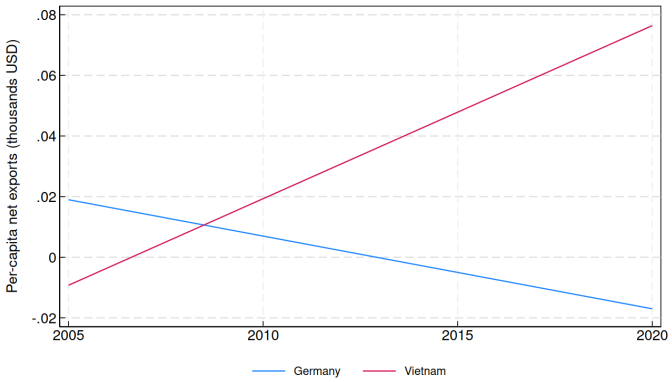
(a) C29: Motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers



(b) C14: Wearing apparel

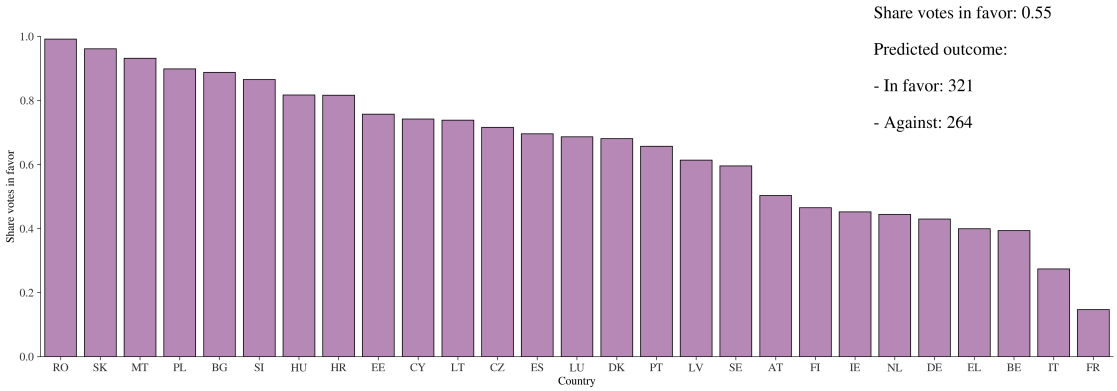


(c) C13: Manufacture of Textiles



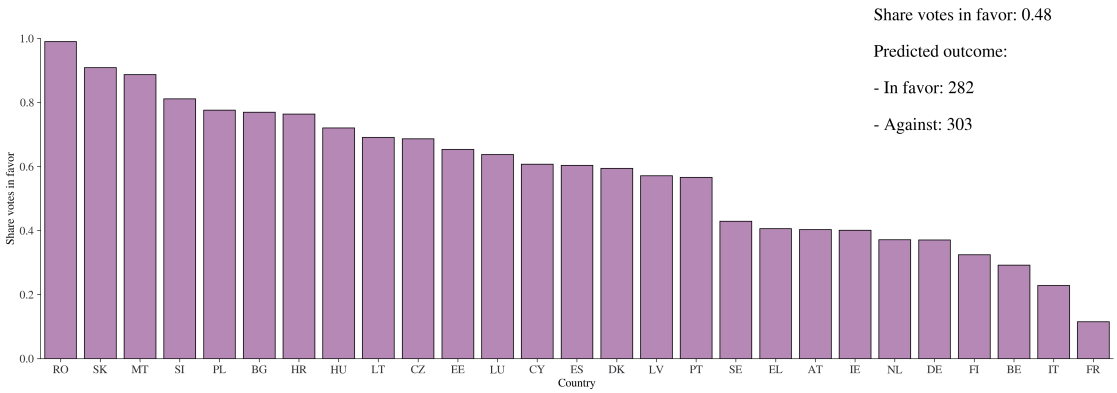
Notes: This figure plots predicted per-capita net exports of Germany and Vietnam in three manufacturing sectors. In sector C29 (motor vehicles), per-capita net exports of Germany always dominate those of Vietnam. In sector C14 (manufacture of wearing apparel), per-capita net exports of Vietnam always dominate those of Germany. C13 (manufacture of textiles) is an example of a switching sector, in which per-capita net exports of Vietnam overtook those of Germany.

Figure A-5
Counterfactual vote on EU-Mercosur in 2020



Notes: The figure illustrates the counterfactual outcome of a vote on an FTA between the EU and Mercosur on the same day as the vote on EU-Vietnam, the last in our sample (see Section 3.5 for details). The bars represent the share of MEPs predicted to vote in favor by country, computed using estimates from column 5 of Table 1. The notes to the right of the plot report the share of votes in favor across all countries, and the number of MEPs that would vote in favor or against based on the predicted probability of each legislator.

Figure A-6
Counterfactual vote on EU-China in 2020



Notes: The figure illustrates the counterfactual outcome of a vote on an FTA between the EU and China on the same day as the vote on EU-Vietnam, the last in our sample (see Section 3.5 for details). The bars represent the share of MEPs predicted to vote in favor by country, computed using estimates from column 5 of Table 1. The notes to the right of the plot report the share of votes in favor across all countries, and the number of MEPs that would vote in favor or against based on the predicted probability of each legislator.

A-2 NUTS regions

The NUTS classification has three levels. NUTS-1 regions correspond to major socio-economic regions with a population between 3 and 7 million, NUTS-2 regions to basic regions with a population between 800,000 and 3 million, and NUTS-3 regions to small regions with a population between 150,000 and 800,000. As most data are only available at the NUTS-2 level, we use this level of aggregation. Not all member states have distinct regions for every NUTS level. Cyprus, Estonia, Luxembourg, Latvia, and Malta, for instance, consist of one NUTS-2 region only. For the remaining member states, the number of NUTS-2 regions varies from two (Croatia and Slovenia) to 38 (Germany). Overall, our dataset includes 262 NUTS-2 regions.

Eurostat and Eurobarometer publications report data at different levels of aggregation over time. For consistency, we fix the boundaries of NUTS-2 regions over time:

- The capital regions of Hungary and Poland were split into two NUTS-2 regions in 2016. Because data for these sub-regions are unavailable prior to this date, we use pre-2016 NUTS-2 regions.
- In Eurobarometer publications, several Italian NUTS-2 regions are reported jointly. We use the same aggregation in our analysis.[56]
- Ireland went from dividing its territory into two NUTS-2 regions to three NUTS-2 regions in 2016. In both versions, NUTS-2 regions are aggregates of historical counties. We thus use county-level population data to construct fixed-boundary NUTS-2 regions over time.[57]
- Slovenia's NUTS-2 borders changed in the 2013 version of the NUTS classification. There is no clear method of converting 2010 NUTS-2 regions into 2013 NUTS-2 regions, so we treat Slovenia as a single NUTS-2 region.
- Several NUTS-2 regions are not covered in the Eurobarometer data and are dropped from the sample.[58]

[56] The aggregation concerns the following regions: Piemonte (ITC1) and Valle d'Aosta (ITC2), Abruzzo (ITF1) and Molise (ITF2), Puglia (ITF4) and Basilicata (ITF5), Trentino (ITH1) and Alto Adige (ITH2).

[57] We first use Census data to obtain population counts at the county level. We then compute the share of every old NUTS-2 region that belongs to a new NUTS-2 region. We finally use these shares to split old NUTS-2 regions across new NUTS-2 regions.

[58] The following NUTS-2 regions are not included in Eurobarometer surveys: North Aegean (EL41), South Aegean (EL42), Ionian Islands (EL62), Ceuta (ES63), Melilla (ES64), Åland (FI20), Corsica (FRM0), the French Overseas (FRY1-FRY5), Açores (PT20), and Madeira (PT30).

A-3 EU constituencies

most member states choose to operate a single, national constituency. There are only six countries that, during the period we study, are divided into sub-national constituencies.

Belgium has three constituencies organized by linguistic community: a Dutch-speaking electoral college, a French-speaking electoral college, and a German-speaking electoral college. The German-speaking college elects only one representative and is fully contained within the Liège Province (the corresponding NUTS-2 region is BE33). Residents of the Brussels-Capital Region can vote either for the Dutch- or the French-speaking candidate list. When constructing measures for these constituencies, we split Brussels using the vote share allocated to each list.

France is divided into eight constituencies during the seventh and eighth legislatures, before becoming a national constituency in 2019. All French sub-national constituencies are aggregates of NUTS-2 regions. As Eurobarometer is not conducted in the Overseas Territories, we drop the Overseas constituency.

Italy is divided into five sub-national constituencies, which are aggregates of NUTS-2 regions. Poland is divided into 13 constituencies which correspond to or are aggregates of NUTS-2 regions.

Poland is divided into 13 constituencies. Given that Eurobarometer and Eurostat (until 2016) report only aggregate data for the Masovian Voivodeship (NUTS-1 region PL9), we treat the Warsaw and Masovian constituencies as one constituency.

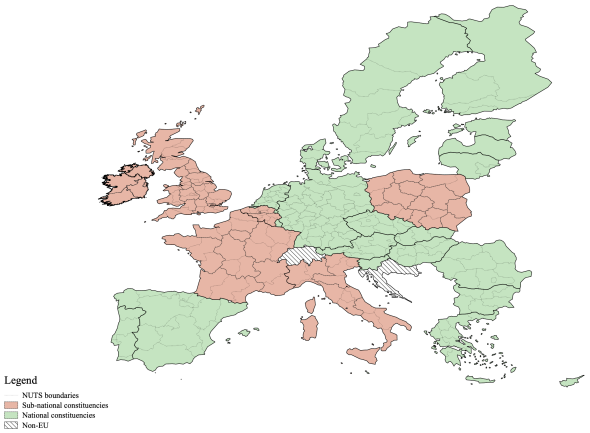
Ireland is divided into two constituencies during the seventh legislature and three constituencies during the eighth and ninth legislatures. The boundaries of the constituencies change from one legislature to another, and they do not correspond to NUTS-2 regions. We construct measures at the constituency level in several steps using the same procedure as for creating fixed-border NUTS-2 regions.

The United Kingdom, while a member of the European Union, was divided into 12 constituencies, all of which were aggregates of NUTS-2 regions.

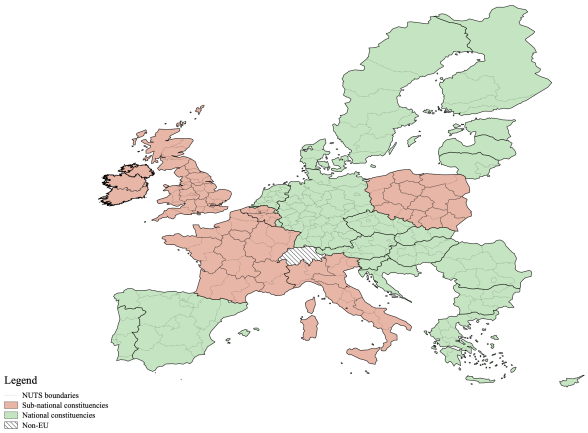
Figure A-7

European constituencies and NUTS-2 regions

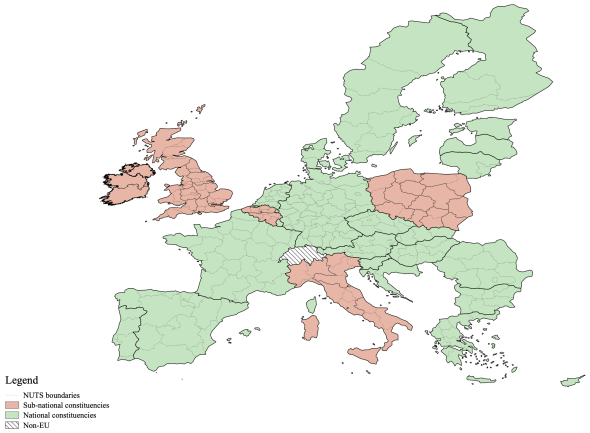
(a) 7th legislature



(b) 8th legislature



(c) 9th legislature



Notes: This figure figure shows the constituencies in which MEPs were elected during the seventh, eight, and ninth legislatures of the EP. Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom use sub-national constituencies throughout the sample period. Until the ninth legislature, France was also divided into sub-national constituencies. With the exception of Ireland, all EP constituencies are aggregates of or overlap with NUTS-2 regions.

A-4 National and Regional Parliaments

National parliaments

Country	Chamber	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Austria	The National Council (Nationalrat)	183	Open-list proportional representation	39 (43 before 2013) local electoral districts contained within NUTS-2 districts; seats not allocated at the local level are allocated to candidates running on 9 state lists, each corresponding to a NUTS-2 region; any remaining seats are allocated to candidates running on national lists	1999, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2013, 2017, 2019	link
Austria	The Federal Council (Bundesrat)	61	Appointment by the state legislatures according to proportional representation	9 states	Not collected	–
Belgium	Chamber of Representatives (Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers, Chambre des Représentants)	150	Open-list proportional representation	11 electoral districts: 10 provinces (5 Dutch-speaking, 5 French-speaking) and Brussels; the electoral districts overlap with NUTS-2 regions	2003, 2007, 2010, 2014, 2019	link1; link2
Belgium	Senate (Senaat, Sénat, Senat)	50	Since 2014, 50 senators are appointed by and from the Parliaments of the federated entities; 10 are co-opted by their peers; before 2014; 40 senators were directly elected	4 federated entities	Not collected	–
Bulgaria	National Assembly (Narodno sabranie)	240	Open-list proportional representation; in 2009, 31 MPs were elected in single-member constituencies using first-past-the-post voting	31 constituencies: 27 provinces that overlap with NUTS-2 regions; Sofia is divided into three constituencies, and Plovdiv into two	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2021 (Apr), 2021 (Jul), 2021 (Nov), 2022, 2023	link
Croatia	Croatian Parliament (Sabor)	151	Partly open-list proportional representation	10 electoral districts in continental Croatia: none districts are contained within a NUTS-2 region; one district spans over both NUTS-2 regions; 3 seats are reserved for Croatians living abroad, and 8 seats are reserved for minorities	2015, 2016, 2020	CLEA
Cyprus	House of Representatives	80	Open-list proportional representation	6 electoral districts	Not collected	–
Czech Republic	Chamber of Deputies (Poslanecká Sněmovna)	200	Open-list proportional representation	14 multi-member constituencies, which correspond to NUTS-3 regions	2002, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017, 2021	link
Czech Republic	Senate (Senát)	81	Two-round system	81 single-seat constituencies that may span over distinct NUTS-2 regions	2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022	link
Denmark	Danish Parliament (Folketing)	179	Open-list proportional representation	10 constituencies (17 before 2007) that overlap with NUTS-2 regions, with the exception of Aarhus (DK04 and DK05), Vejle (DK03 and DK04), and Viborg (DK03 and DK04)	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2022	link
Estonia	Parliament of Estonia (Riigikogu)	101	Open-list proportional representation	12 constituencies	Not collected	–
Finland	Parliament of Finland (Suomen eduskunta)	200	Open-list proportional representation	13 multi-member districts and Åland; constituencies are contained within a NUTS-2 region, with the exception of South-Eastern Finland (FI1C4, FI1C5, and FI1D1) and Vaasa (FI1D5, FI195, and FI194)	1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019	link
France	National Assembly (Assemblée nationale)	577	Two-round system	577 constituencies contained within a département (NUTS-3 region)	1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022	link1; link2; CLEA
France	Senate (Sénat)	348	Indirectly elected 150,000 officials (*grands électeurs*) using both a two-round system and proportional representation	109 constituencies	Not collected	–
Germany	Bundestag	598 nominal members	Mixed-member proportional representation: 299 (328 in 1998) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by open-list at the federal level	Most single-member constituencies are contained within NUTS2 regions, with some exceptions; party lists are submitted at the state level (NUTS1 regions)	1998, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017, 2021	link
Germany	Bundesrat	69	Appointed by state governments	Federal states	Not collected	–

National parliaments (cont.)

Country	Chamber	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Greece	Hellenic Parliament (Ellinikó Koinovoúlio)	300	250 seats by open-list proportional representation; 50 seats are allocated as a bonus to the party receiving the largest share of votes	56 constituencies overlapping with NUTS-3 regions	2007, 2009, 2012 (May), 2012 (June), 2015 (January), 2015 (September), 2019	link
Hungary	National Assembly (Országgyülés)	386 (1998-2014); 199 (2014-)	Mixed-member proportional representation; 1998-2010: 176 MPs elected in single-member constituencies; 210 MPs elected on territorial and national lists; 2014-2022: 106 MPs elected in single-member constituencies by plurality; 93 MPs elected on party lists	Single-member constituencies and territorial lists are contained within NUTS-2 regions	1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2014; 2018; 2022	link; CLEA
Ireland	Lower Chamber (Dáil Éireann)	166 (2002-2016); 158 (2016-2020); 160 (2020-)	Single-transferable voting	Most constituencies are contained within NUTS-2 regions with the exception of Longford-Roscommon (IE04 and IE06)	2002; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2020	link; CLEA
Ireland	Upper Chamber (Seanad Éireann)	60	Single-transferable voting; not directly elected	–	Not collected	–
Italy	Senate (Senato)	315 (2001-2006); 307 (2006-2018); 315 (2018-2022); 200 (2022-)	2001-2006, 2018 - : Mixed member proportional representation: 232 (116 between 2018 and 2022, 74 since 2022) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats are allocated to minority parties by a proportional method between 2001 and 2006; between 2018 and 2022, the remaining seats are elected in 37 (30 since 2022) multi-member constituencies; 2006-2018: Closed-list proportional representation, 1 seat by first-past-the-post voting in Aosta Valley	2001-2006: 232 single-member constituencies; 2006-2018: 22 multiple-member constituencies, 7 single-member constituencies; 2018-2022: 116 single-member constituencies, 37 multi-member constituencies; 2022 - 74 single-member constituencies; 30 multi-member constituencies; all constituencies are contained within a unique NUTS-2 region	2001; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2018; 2022	link
Italy	Chamber of Deputies (Camera dei deputati)	630 (2001-2006); 617 (2006-2018); 630 (2018-2022); 400 (2022-)	2001-2006, 2018 - : Mixed member proportional representation: 475 (232 between 2018 and 2022, 147 since 2022) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats are elected in 26 (67 between 2018 and 2022, 53 since 2022) multi-member constituencies; 2006-2018: Closed-list proportional representation, 1 seat by first-past-the-post voting in Aosta Valley, 12 seas by open-list proportional representation for Italians living abroad	2001-2006: 475 single-member constituencies, 26 multiple-member constituencies; 2006-2018: 30 multiple-member constituencies, 1 single-member constituency; 2018-2022: 232 single-member constituencies, 67 multi-member constituencies; 2022 - 147 single-member constituencies; 53 multi-member constituencies	2001; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2018; 2022; all constituencies are contained within a unique NUTS-2 region	link1; link2
Latvia	Parliament (Saeima)	100	Open-list proportional representation	5 constituencies	Not collected	–
Lithuania	Parliament (Seimas)	141	Mixed member proportional representation: 71 seats are elected in single-member constituencies; 70 seats are elected at the national level by open-list proportional representation	71 electoral districts; their boundaries may not overall with NUTS-2 regions	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016; 2020	CLEA
Luxembourg	Chamber of Deputies	60	Open-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	Not collected	–
Malta	Parliament (Il-Parlament ta' Malta)	65+	Single-transferable voting; additional seats may be allocated to achieve proportional representation	13 electoral districts	Not collected	–
Netherlands	House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal)	150	Open-list proportional representation	Unique constituency	Not collected	–
Netherlands	Senate (Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal)	75	Elected by the members of the States-Provincial and electoral colleges in the Caribbean Netherlands by proportional representation	Unique constituency	Not collected	–
Poland	Lower Chamber (Sejm)	460	Open-list proportional representation	41 electoral constituencies, contained within NUTS-2 regions	2001; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019	link; CLEA
Poland	Upper Chamber (Senate)	100	2001-2011: plurality bloc voting – two or more candidates with the highest support are elected from each constituency; 2011 - : senators are elected in single-member constituencies by first-past-the-post voting	2001-2011: 36 multi-member constituencies; 2011 - : 100 single-member constituencies; all constituencies are contained within a unique NUTS-2 region	2001; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019	link; CLEA

National parliaments (cont.)

Country	Chamber	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Portugal	Assembly of the Republic (Assembleia da República)	230	Closed list proportional representation	22 electoral districts; some electoral districts spread over several NUTS-2 regions: Aveiro (PT11 and PT16), Guarda (PT11 and PT16), Lisboa (PT16, PT17, and PT18), Santarem (PT16 and PT18), Setubal (PT17 and PT19), Viseu (PT11 and PT16)	2005, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2022	link
Romania	Chamber of Deputies (Camera Deputaților)	345 (2000-2004); 332 (2004-2008); 334 (2008-2012); 412 (2012-2016); 329 (2016-)	2000-2008, 2016-2020: Closed-list proportional representation; 2008-2016: Mixed member proportional representation (a candidate wins a seat in his constituency is (s)he won more than 50% of votes; non-allocated seats are allocated using the d'Hondt system); additional seats may be added	2002-2008: 42 multi-member constituencies; 2008-2012: 315 single-member constituencies; 2012-2016: 316 single-member constituencies; 2016 - : 43 multi-member constituencies	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016; 2020	link1; link2; link3; link4; CLEA
Romania	Senate (Senat)	140 (2000-2004); 137 (2004-2012); 176 (2012-)	2000-2008, 2016-2020: Closed-list proportional representation; 2008-2016: Mixed member proportional representation (a candidate wins a seat in his constituency is (s)he won more than 50% of votes; non-allocated seats are allocated using the d'Hondt system); additional seats may be added	2002-2008: 42 multi-member constituencies; 2008-2012: 315 single-member constituencies; 2012-2016: 137 single-member constituencies; 2016 - : 43 multi-member constituencies	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016; 2020	link1; link2; link3; link4; CLEA
Slovakia	National Council (Národná rada Slovenskej republiky)	150	Open-list proportional representation	Unique constituency	Not collected	–
Slovenia	National Assembly (Državni zbor Republike Slovenije)	90	Open-list proportional representation	11 constituencies, that may not overlap with NUTS-2 boundaries	Not collected	–
Slovenia	National Council (Državni svet)	40	Indirectly elected by local council and functional constituencies	–	Not collected	–
Spain	Congress of Deputies (Congreso de los Diputados)	350	Closed-list proportional representation	52 constituencies that are contained within NUTS2 regions	2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2016; 2019 (Apr); 2019 (Nov)	link1; link2; link3
Spain	Senate (Senado)	266	208 senators directly elected by closed-list proportional representation; 58 additional senators designated by regional legislatures	52 constituencies that are contained within NUTS2 regions	2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2016; 2019 (Apr); 2019 (Nov)	link1; link2; link3
Sweden	Riksdag	349	310 MPs are elected through open-list proportional representation on multi-member party lists that are either regional or national; remaining seats are elected by proportional balancing	29 constituencies that are contained within NUTS-2 regions	2002; 2006; 2010; 2014; 2018; 2022	link
United Kingdom	House of Commons	659 (1997-2001); 646 (2005); 650 (2010-2019)	First-past-the-post voting method	Constituencies may spread across several NUTS-2 regions	1997; 2001; 2005; 2010; 2015; 2017; 2019	CLEA
United Kingdom	House of Lords	Varies	Spiritual and Temporal Lords, not directly elected	None	Not collected	–

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Regional parliaments in Belgium

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Brussels	75 (1999-2004); 89 (2004-)	Open-list proportional voting	Single constituency	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Flanders	124	Open-list proportional voting	12 constituencies (1999-2004); 6 constituencies (2004-)	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
German-speaking region	25	Open list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Wallonia	75	Open-list proportional voting	13 constituencies (1999-2019); 11 constituencies (2019-)	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Regional parliaments in Germany

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Baden-Württemberg (DE1)	120+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 70 seats in single-member constituencies; 50 seats by proportional representation; additional leveling and overhang seats	70 constituencies	1996; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Bavaria (DE2)	204 (1998-2003); 180+ (2003-)	Mixed-member proportional representation: 91 (102 in 1998, 92 in 2003) seats in single-member electoral districts; remaining seats using open lists in seven constituencies; additional leveling and overhang seats	91 (102 in 1998, 92 in 2003) electoral districts; 7 constituencies	1998; 2003; 2008; 2013; 2018	link
Berlin (DE3)	130+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 78 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using regional or state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	78 electoral districts; 12 (23 in 1999) regional lists	1999; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Brandenburg (DE4)	89 (1999-2004); 88 (2004-)	Mixed-member proportional representation: 44 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists	44 electoral districts	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Bremen (DE5)	83	Open-list proportional representation	2 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019	link
Hamburg (DE6)	121+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 71 seats in multi-member constituencies via open lists; 50 additional seats elected at the state level via open lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	17 electoral districts	1997; 2001; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2020	link
Hesse (DE7)	110+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 55 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats at the state level via closed lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	55 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2008; 2009; 2013; 2018	link
Lower Saxony (DE8)	135+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 87 (100 before 2008) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	100 constituencies (1998-2008); 87 constituencies (2008-)	1998; 2003; 2008; 2013; 2017; 2022	link
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE9)	71+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 36 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	36 constituencies	1998; 2002; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
North Rhine-Westphalia (DEA)	181+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 128 (151 before 2005) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	151 constituencies (2000-2005); 128 constituencies (2005-)	2000; 2005; 2010; 2012; 2017; 2022	link
Rhineland-Palatinate (DEB)	101+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 52 (51 before 2021) seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	51 constituencies (1996-2021); 52 constituencies (2021-)	1996; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Saarland (DEC)	51	Proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2004; 2009; 2012; 2017; 2022	link
Saxony (DED)	120+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 60 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	60 constituencies	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link
Saxony-Anhalt (DEE)	83+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 41-49 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	49 constituencies (1998-2006); 45 constituencies (2006-2016); 43 constituencies (2016-2021); 41 constituencies (2021-)	1998; 2002; 2006; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Schleswig-Holstein (DEF)	69+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 35 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	45 constituencies (1996-2005); 40 constituencies (2005-2012); 35 constituencies (2012-)	1996; 2000; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2017; 2022	link
Thuringia (DEG)	88+	Mixed-member proportional representation: 44 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using state lists; additional leveling and overhang seats	44 constituencies	1999; 2004; 2009; 2014; 2019	link

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

Regional parliaments in Spain

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Andalusia (ES61)	109	Closed-list proportional representation	8 constituencies	2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2015; 2018; 2022	link
Aragon (ES24)	67	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Asturias (ES12)	45	Closed-list proportional representation	3 electoral districts	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2012; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Balearic Islands (ES53)	59	Closed-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Basque Country (ES21)	75	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1998; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2016; 2020	link
Canary Islands (ES70)	60 (1999-2019); 70 (2019-)	Closed-list proportional representation	8 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Cantabria (ES13)	39 (1999-2015) 35 (2015-)	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Castile–La Mancha (ES42)	47 (1999-2011); 49 (2011-2015); 33 (2015-)	Closed-list proportional representation	5 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Castile and Leon (ES41)	83 (1999-2003); 82 (2003-2007); 84 (2007-2019); 81 (2019-)	Closed-list proportional representation	9 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2022	link
Catalonia (ES51)	135	Closed-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2006; 2010; 2012; 2015; 2017; 2021	link
Extremadura (ES43)	65	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Galicia (ES11)	75	Closed-list proportional representation	4 constituencies	1997; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2016; 2020	link
La Rioja (ES23)	33	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Madrid (ES30)	102 (1999-2003); 111 (2003-2007); 120 (2007-2011); 129 (2011-2019); 132 (2019-2021); 136 (2021-2023); 135 (2023-)	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2021; 2023	link
Region of Murcia (ES62)	45	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA
Navarre (ES22)	50	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA
Valencian Community (ES52)	89 (1999-2007); 99 (2007-)	Closed-list proportional representation	3 constituencies	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	link
Ceuta (ES63)	25	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA
Melilla (ES64)	25	Closed-list proportional representation	Single constituency	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023	NA

Notes: PDFs with the results in each region are also available at this link. Whenever possible, we also collect data on substitutes, except for the following regions: Navarre, Ceuta, and Melilla.

Regional parliaments in the United Kingdom

Region	# seats	Electoral rule	Constituencies	Election years	Source
Northern Ireland	108 (1998-2017); 90 (2017-)	Single transferable vote	18 constituencies	1998; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2017; 2022	link
Scotland	129	Mixed-member proportional representation: 73 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using regional lists	73 constituencies and 8 regions	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2021	link
Wales	60	Mixed-member proportional representation: 40 seats in single-member constituencies; remaining seats by proportional representation using regional lists	40 constituencies and 5 regions	1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2016; 2021	link

Notes: We also collect data on substitutes.

A-5 Tables

Table A-1
Elections to the European Parliament

Country	Constituencies	Electoral system	Allocation method	Threshold	Source
Austria	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Belgium	Three sub-national constituencies	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Bulgaria	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	None	link
Croatia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Cyprus	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	1.8%	link
Czech Republic	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Denmark	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Estonia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Finland	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
France	Eight sub-national constituencies (2009-19); Single constituency (2019-)	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Germany	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	Sainte-Haguë method	5%	link
Greece	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	3%	link
Hungary	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Ireland	Two sub-national constituencies (2009-14); Three sub-national constituencies (2014-)	Single-transferable voting	Droop quota, random apportionment	None	link
Italy	Five sub-national constituencies	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota method	4%	link
Latvia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Sainte-Haguë method	4%	link
Lithuania	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Hare quota	5%	link
Luxembourg	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Malta	Single constituency	Single-transferable voting	Droop quota, random apportionment	None	link
Netherlands	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Poland	Thirteen sub-national constituencies	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Portugal	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Romania	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	5%	link
Slovakia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Droop quota method	5%	link
Slovenia	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Spain	Single constituency	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link
Sweden	Single constituency	Open-list proportional representation	Scandinavian method	4%	link
United Kingdom	Twelve sub-national constituencies	Closed-list proportional representation	D'Hondt method	None	link

Table A-2
MEPs' birthplace and political attachment

Country	# MEPs	Birthplace available	Candidate national parliament	Elected national parliament	Elected regional parliament
Austria	45	44 (97.78%)	30 (66.67%)	13 (28.89%)	– –
Belgium	48	41 (85.42%)	26 (54.17%)	11 (22.92%)	20 (41.67%)
Bulgaria	42	39 (92.86%)	30 (71.43%)	22 (52.38%)	– –
Croatia	20	15 (75.00%)	10 (50.00%)	9 (45.00%)	– –
Cyprus	15	– –	– –	– –	– –
Czech Republic	49	47 (95.92%)	33 (67.35%)	19 (38.78%)	– –
Denmark	29	29 (100%)	20 (68.97%)	15 (51.72%)	– –
Estonia	16	– –	– –	– –	– –
Finland	33	33 (100%)	32 (96.97%)	27 (81.82%)	– –
France	176	157 (89.20%)	96 (54.55%)	27 (15.34%)	– –
Germany	190	181 (95.26%)	70 (36.84%)	19 (10.00%)	57 (30.00%)
Greece	57	49 (85.96%)	23 (40.35%)	15 (26.32%)	– –
Hungary	44	37 (84.09%)	34 (77.27%)	18 (40.91%)	– –
Ireland	26	– –	– –	– –	– –
Italy	176	171 (97.16%)	95 (53.98%)	49 (27.84%)	– –
Latvia	19	– –	– –	– –	– –
Lithuania	24	21 (87.50%)	21 (87.50%)	13 (54.17%)	– –
Luxembourg	13	– –	– –	– –	– –
Malta	13	– –	– –	– –	– –
Netherlands	56	52 (92.86%)	– –	– –	– –
Poland	116	113 (97.41%)	98 (84.48%)	87 (75.00%)	– –
Portugal	50	40 (80.00%)	27 (54.00%)	18 (36.00%)	– –
Romania	72	71 (98.61%)	46 (63.89%)	35 (48.61%)	– –
Slovakia	30	29 (96.67%)	– –	– –	– –
Slovenia	17	– –	– –	– –	– –
Spain	134	123 (91.79%)	66 (49.25%)	40 (29.85%)	62 (46.27%)
Sweden	52	45 (86.54%)	39 (75.00%)	26 (50.00%)	– –
United Kingdom	153	131 (85.62%)	86 (56.21%)	7 (4.58%)	11 (7.19%)
Total	1,715	1,468 (85.60%)	882 (51.43%)	470 (27.41%)	150 (8.75%)

Notes: We drop from the final sample MEPs who were elected in different countries during their tenure in the EP (2 MEPs), and MEPs who were only elected in the French Overseas constituency (4 MEPs). In identifying the region of birth, we discard MEPs who were born in a different country than the one where they were elected in the EP (117 MEPs), MEPs born in regions for which we lack data on covariates (11 MEPs), MEPs born in the French Overseas constituencies (2 MEPs), MEPs from countries that are not divided into several NUTS-2 regions, including Slovenia (88 MEPs), MEPs born in Ireland (24 MEPs), and MEPs born in Brussels (5 MEPs). In identifying the region where MEPs ran and/or were elected to national parliaments, we do not consider countries that are not divided into several NUTS-2 regions, including Slovenia. We exclude from the sample Ireland due to NUTS-2 border changes over time and the MEPs with a political career in Brussels. We further discard the Netherlands and Slovakia as their national parliaments have a single national constituency. We also drop MEPs who ran or were elected in regions for which we lack data on covariates.

Table A-3
Eurostat datasets

Dataset	Variables	Sample	Notes	Source
Population by educational attainment level, sex and NUTS 2 regions (%)	% Population with tertiary education	Both genders, age 25-64	Missing values for the UK in 2020	link
Employment by sex, age, economic activity and NUTS 2 regions (NACE Rev. 2)	Employment levels in aggregate sectors	Both genders, age 15-74, 10 industry groups	394 missing values	link
SBS data by NUTS 2 regions and NACE Rev. 2	Persons employed in two-digit sectors	67 two-digit industries	13,388 missing values out of 72,628	link
Unemployment rates by sex, age, educational attainment level and NUTS 2 regions (%)	Unemployment rate	All educational levels, both genders, age 15-74	15 missing values	link
Number of households by degree of urbanisation and NUTS 2 regions (1 000)	Urbanization rate	Degrees of urbanization: cities, towns and suburbs, rural areas	15 missing values	link
Eurobarometer	Favorable opinion on trade	Eurobarometer surveys 65.2, 67.2, 72.4, 82.3, 84.3, 85.2, 86.2, 87.2, 88.3, 89.1, 90.3, 91.5;	Classify "very positive" and "positive" images of trade as favorable opinions. Nuts regions not included: EL41, EL42, EL62, ES63, ES64, FI20, FRM0, FRY1-FRY5, PT20, PT30.	link
Eurobarometer	Trust in political parties	Eurobarometer surveys 65.2, 66.1, 66.3, 68.1, 69.2, 70.1, 71.3, 72.4, 73.4, 74.2, 76.3, 77.3, 78.1, 79.3, 80.1, 81.2, 81.4, 82.3, 83.3, 84.3, 85.2, 86.2, 87.3, 88.3, 89.1, 90.3, 91.2, 91.5, 92.3, 93.1	NUTS regions not included: EL41, EL42, EL62, ES63, ES64, FI20, FRM0, FRY1-FRY5, PT20, PT30.	link
Eurobarometer	Trust in the EU	Eurobarometer surveys 65.2, 66.1, 67.2, 68.1, 69.2, 70.1, 71.1, 71.3, 72.4, 73.4, 74.2, 75.3, 76.3, 77.3, 78.1, 79.3, 80.1, 81.2, 81.4, 82.3, 83.1, 83.3, 84.3, 85.2, 86.2, 87.2, 87.3, 88.3, 89.1, 90.3, 91.2, 91.5, 92.3, 93.1	NUTS regions not included: EL41, EL42, EL62, ES63, ES64, FI20, FRM0, FRY1-FRY5, PT20, PT30.	link
Eurobarometer	Ideological positioning on a left-right scale	Eurobarometer surveys 65.1, 65.2, 66.1, 66.3, 67.2, 68.1, 69.2, 70.1, 71.1, 71.3, 72.4, 73.4, 74.2, 75.3, 78.2, 79.5, 81.2, 81.4, 82.3, 83.1, 83.3, 84.3, 85.2, 86.2, 87.1, 87.2, 87.3, 88.3, 89.1, 90.3, 91.2, 91.5, 92.2, 92.3, 93.1, 94.2	NUTS regions not included: EL41, EL42, EL62, ES63, ES64, FI20, FRM0, FRY1-FRY5, PT20, PT30.	link

Table A-4
Matching service sectors in EBOPS2010 to NACE Rev. 2

EBOPS2010 codes	**EBOPS2010 description**	**NACE Rev. 2 codes**	**NACE Rev. 2 description**
SC	Transport	H49	Land transport and transport via pipelines
SC	Transport	H50	Water transport
SC	Transport	H51	Air transport
SC	Transport	H52	Warehousing and support activities for transportation
SC	Transport	H53	Postal and courier activities
SD	Travel	I55	Accommodation
SD	Travel	I56	Food and beverage service activities
SE	Construction	F41	Construction of buildings
SE	Construction	F42	Civil engineering
SE	Construction	F43	Specialised construction activities
SF	Insurance and pension services	K	Financial and Insurance Activities
SG	Financial services	K	Financial and Insurance Activities
SI	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	J58	Publishing activities
SI	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	J59	Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities
SI	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	J60	Programming and broadcasting activities
SI	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	J61	Telecommunications
SI	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	J62	Computer programming, consultancy and related activities
SI	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	J63	Information service activities

A-6 Descriptive statistics

Table A-5
MEP-level variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
$Vote_{i,a,t}$	9,962	0.76	0.42	0.00	1.00
$Female_i$	1,715	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
$Age_{i,t}$	10,542	53.37	10.93	21.81	92.31
$Tenure_{i,t}$	10,542	5.94	5.57	0.00	38.70

Notes: See Section 2 for details on the sources of the data and the construction of the variables.

Table A-6
Control variables (National party, Constituency and country level)

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t}$	6,332	0.41	0.24	0.00	0.95
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t}$ (with services)	6,332	0.55	0.16	0.16	0.94
Tertiary Education$_{np,c(k)}$	1,152	24.80	7.19	11.59	39.32
Unemployed$_{np,c(k)}$	1,152	6.97	2.52	2.87	17.32
Urban$_{np,c(k)}$	1,152	70.56	19.86	10.40	99.98
Left-Right Index$_{np,c(k)}$	1,152	5.38	0.53	3.51	6.51
Trust in Political Parties$_{np,c(k)}$	1,152	17.84	11.61	2.50	55.22
Trust in EU$_{np,c(k)}$	1,152	56.02	15.38	16.41	79.98
Pro-Trade Opinions$_{k,t}$	165	80.12	8.59	54.30	95.10

Notes: See Section 2 for details on the sources of the data and the construction of the variables.

Table A-7
FTA-level and bilateral variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
log *GDP*$_a$	16	18.13	2.54	13.32	22.30
log *Population*$_a$	16	9.69	1.90	5.21	11.76
WTO membership$_a$	16	0.92	0.26	0.00	1.00
log *Distance*$_{k,a}$	448	8.81	0.76	5.88	9.77
Common Language$_{k,a}$	448	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Colonial Ties$_{k,a}$	448	0.03	0.16	0.00	1.00
Diplomatic Disagreement$_{k,a}$	448	1.01	0.65	0.00	2.90

Notes: See Section 2 for details on the sources of the data and the construction of the variables.

A-7 Additional results and robustness checks

Table A-8

MEPs' trade votes and trade interests of their constituency
(linear probability model)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.080***	0.078***	0.069***	0.085***	0.104***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.023)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
R-squared	0.599	0.599	0.607	0.613	0.628

Notes: This table reports the coefficients of a linear probability model. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-9
First stage IV

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share $IV_{np,c(k(g)),a,t-1}$	0.835***	0.836***	0.851***	0.850***	0.721***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS

Notes: This table reports the first step of the IV logit specification. The dependent variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ is defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The control variable *Export Share* $IV_{k,a,t-1}$ is defined in equation (8). The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-10

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituencies
(2SLS)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.088***	0.086***	0.072***	0.091***	0.122***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.030)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962
Estimation method	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS
KP F-statistic	3,363	3,403	3,766	3,984	2,228

Notes: This table reports the coefficients on the export share estimated using a two-stage-least-squares model. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The instrument *Export Share* $IV_{k,a,t-1}$ is defined in equation (8). The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-11

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituencies
(including MEP fixed effects)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	3.046***	3.621***	3.623***
	(0.563)	(0.661)	(0.674)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,324	3,324	3,324
Estimation method	c. logit	c. logit	c.logit

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share estimated using a conditional logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-12

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituencies
(including MEP fixed effects, linear probability model)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.125***	0.114***	0.123***
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	9,773	9,773	9,773
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS
R-squared	0.725	0.730	0.732

Notes: This table reports the coefficients of the export share estimated using a linear probability model. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-13

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituencies
(including FTA fixed effects)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.066***	0.064***	0.057***	0.061***	0.067***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
FTA FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.750	0.751	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-14

MEPs' trade votes and trade interests of their constituency
(abstentions as negative votes)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.101***	0.098***	0.090***	0.112***	0.152***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.037)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,501
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.722	0.722	0.722	0.722	0.721

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it or abstains. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-15

MEPs' trade votes and trade interests of their constituency
(abstentions as positive votes)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.057***	0.056***	0.051***	0.059***	0.072***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.017)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,542	10,426
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.777	0.777	0.777	0.777	0.775

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t or abstains, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-16

MEPs' trade votes and trade interests of their constituency
(including services)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.056**	0.050**	0.078***	0.060**	-0.001
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.751	0.752	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (5) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-17

MEPs' trade votes and trade opinions of their constituency

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Pro-Trade Opinions$_{np,k,t-1}$	0.003***	0.003***	0.004***	0.003***	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,962	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.751	0.751	0.751	0.752	0.750

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Pro-Trade Opinions*$_{np,k,t-1}$ captures pro-trade opinions of the electorate of national party np in country k in the most recent Eurobarometer survey. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-18

MEP's votes and trade interests of their electorate
(excluding regional interests)

	Region of birth (1)	Region of candidacy (2)	Domestic constituency (3)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.092***	0.099***	0.100***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	8,472	8,677	8,738
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.742	0.740	0.737

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (4) captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU electorate vis-à-vis the FTA with a in the year before the vote. In column 1, this variable is constructed excluding the MEP's region of birth; in column 2, it excludes the region he/she ran to represent in national elections; in column 3, it excludes the region he/she represented in the national or regional parliament. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-19

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituency
(controlling for large firms)

	Employment > 250	Employment > 50
	(1)	(2)
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$	0.092***	0.092***
	(0.019)	(0.019)
Large Firms$_{k,t-1}$	0.069	0.116**
	(0.049)	(0.056)
Gravity controls	Yes	Yes
MEP controls	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	Yes	Yes
Political controls	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	9,848	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export share from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$ is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in constituency c of country k for national party np belonging to European party ep) votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$ defined in equation (4) captures the interest of national party np in constituency c vis-à-vis agreement a in the year before the vote. The variable *Large Firms*$_{k,t-1}$ is the logarithm of one plus the number of firms with more than 250 employees (column 1) or above 50 employees (column 2) in country k and year $t-1$. The gravity controls capture characteristics of the trading partner(s) in agreement a (GDP, population, and an indicator for WTO membership) and of the relationship between EU country k and the partner(s) of agreement a (distance, common language, common border, colonial ties, and UN diplomatic disagreement score). All the gravity variables are measured in 2008. The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the MEP. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, while the political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU. Socio-economic and political controls are constructed combining pre-determined (in 2008) regional characteristics with the vote shares of national parties in the previous European elections, and are interacted with year-specific fixed effects. Robust standard errors, clustered at the MEP level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.

Table A-20

Votes on trade agreements by US and EU legislators

	(1)	(2)
Export Share$_{c,t-1}$	0.128*	
	(0.077)	
Export Share$_{np,c(k),a,t-1}$		0.093***
		(0.019)
Legislator controls	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	7,664	9,848
Estimation method	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.687	0.748

Notes: This table reports marginal effects of a logit model evaluated at sample means. In column 1 (column 2), the dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a,t}$ ($Vote_{i(c(k),np,ep),a,t}$), which is equal to 1 if US senator (MEP) i, elected in US state (EU constituency of country k) c, and belonging to party p (MEP of national party np belonging to European party ep), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Share*$_{c,t}$ is the share of jobs in export-oriented industries for constituency c, obtained using data in Conconi *et al.* (2014). In column 2 the *Export Share*$_{np,c(k),a,t}$ is defined as in our baseline specification (Table 1). In all columns, the legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the US senators and MEPs. In column 1 (2), the agreement fixed effects are defined at the FTA-chamber (FTA) level, given the bicameral (unicameral) structure of the US Congress (EP). Robust standard errors, clustered at the legislator level, are reported in parentheses. * significant at the 10% level, ** significant at the 5% level, *** significant at the 1% level.