Question for written answer E-001466/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Tiago Moreira de Sá (PfE), Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE), Georgiana Teodorescu (ECR), Jaroslav Bžoch (PfE), Jaroslava Pokorná Jermanová (PfE), Dominik Tarczyński (ECR), Antonín Staněk (PfE), Mieke Andriese (PfE), Milan Uhrík (ESN), Diana Iovanovici Şoşoacă (NI), Irmhild Boßdorf (ESN), Ewa Zajączkowska-Hernik (PfE), Gerolf Annemans (PfE), Petr Bystron (ESN)

Subject: EU institutional reform: two-speed Europe, unanimity under threat, and the rise of hidden federalism

In current EU debates, leaders such as Ursula von der Leyen have promoted mechanisms such as enhanced cooperation and a ‘two-speed Europe’ to overcome institutional deadlocks rooted in the need for unanimity, enabling coalitions of ‘willing Member States’ to advance strategic economic and policy priorities. The Commission President has also called for the reactivation of the EU’s mutual defence clause under Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union, warning that the absence of effective majority decision-making undermines the EU’s responsiveness. These institutional reforms, also known as the ‘castle method’ and supported by figures such as EPP leader Manfred Weber, risk fostering a form of camouflaged federalism in which authority gradually shifts from national capitals to EU institutions under the banner of ‘strategic autonomy’. Therefore, we ask the Commission:

1. How does the idea of differentiated integration (without unanimity) reconcile with the defence of national sovereignty and full compliance with the existing Treaties, without enabling supranational integration that undermines the authority of elected national governments?

2. How does the Commission justify diminishing the unanimity requirement (a key safeguard for Member State consent) in foreign and defence policy?

3. How does the Commission distinguish between genuine ‘strategic autonomy’ and an incremental shift toward supranational federalism that reduces national accountability and transfers decision-making power away from democratically elected national parliaments?

Supporter[1]

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