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Strengthening European democracy by granting more powers to the European Parliament

According to Article 10 TEU, the European Parliament represents the Union's citizens and every citizen has **the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union**. However, there is a **contradiction between this statement and the fact that the European Parliament lacks the powers traditionally exercised by a national parliament**: the power to express a government, the power to decide on the internal welfare (fiscal power and economic policy) and external security (foreign and defense policy) of the Union's citizens, the power to initiate legislation. This contradiction is due to the fact that the Member States, through the bodies representing them (the Council and the European Council), have kept the power to take political decisions in their own hands, thus preventing the **emergence of a true European democracy** and preventing citizens from having their say on the fundamental choices for their future. This is also reflected in the way the European Parliament is elected, i.e. in the lack of a uniform electoral law.

Giving the European Parliament the powers of a parliament in a democratic system would, on the other hand, **allow the common interest of European citizens to emerge and guarantee them European public goods**, which are essential in the face of the Member States' inability to meet challenges with a supranational dimension, and would boost the development of a Europe-wide debate on issues crucial to citizens' lives, making them feel part of a political community.

Possible amendments to the Treaties:

The first area in which decisive steps could be taken to strengthen the role of the European Parliament is the **completion of economic and monetary union**. The European Parliament has a completely marginal role in this area: while the body representing the citizens should be able to decide on the economic, fiscal and social policy of the Union, it has no fiscal power and is only consulted on measures to coordinate the economic and social policies of the Member States.

Thus, **giving the European Parliament fiscal power**, is an absolute priority. This can be done by amending articles 310, 311, 312 TFEU: as in any democracy, the body representing the citizens should be able to decide on fiscal resources, whereas *today the European Parliament finds itself in the anomalous situation of representing the citizens but having no power to tax and decide on the Union's resources*. This change is made urgent also by the need to secure the debt of Next Generation EU through mechanisms that allow the creation of new resources without going through a unanimous decision of the states.

There are also other possible reforms that are crucial to enhance the democratic dimension of the EU by granting new direct powers to the EP, and they are:

- giving the European Parliament the power to decide on an equal footing with the Council (ordinary legislative procedure) on the coordination of the member states' economic and employment policies (Articles 121, 126, 148 TFEU).
- giving the European Parliament a **legislative initiative power** in addition to the Commission's power of initiative in cases of Commission inaction (amendment of Articles 14 TEU and 225 TFEU)
- strengthening the role of the European Parliament in relation to the procedure for revising the Treaties. In particular, one might envisage a form of intervention by the European Parliament in the event that unanimous ratification is not achieved, but the new treaty is ratified by 4/5 of the Member States.

These reforms would create the basis for real democratic political life at European level, and at the same time for a Europe that is sovereign and effective in its action.