

Voice of the People

Manuscript
Institutions of the European Union
The Parliament
With answers from politicians in Brussels
TVSYD, Denmark

Crew:

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Translation
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53'32

0'01

I'd like to know which measures the Parliament plans to take in order to get closer relations to the various national parliaments.

0'14

Answer, Joost Lagendijk, Member of the Parliament, The Greens, Brussels:

I think they should. Because what we are now seeing is that if something is a success, the national governments say: "We did it." If it's a failure, they say: "Brussels did it." But Brussels is the national governments. It's the national ministers who come together, who decide together with the Parliament to do something or not to do something.

0'34

SIGN:

Since 1979, the members of Parliament have been elected by direct elections by the people they represent.

0'42

Well, isn't the Parliament superfluous? Isn't it just a tremendous expense? And then I think it's ridiculous that they move from one city to another. To me it seems quite silly.

1'05

Answer, Joost Lagendijk, Member of the Parliament, The Greens, Brussels:

I don't think so. I think a lot of people understand in the whole of Europe that some issues like environment, consumer protection have to be dealt with at European level, because you can't deal with them at a national level. So if we, if the Europeans decide to do so at the European level, I think we should have a European democracy. Not on all issues. Not on the things the nation states can still take care of. But if we do decide things on a European level, I think everybody expects us to do it in a democratic way. And therefore you need a directly elected Parliament. It's not to take away all kind of powers from the nation states, but in some cases like environment, we do need a European Parliament to control European decisions.

1'51

SIGN:

Joseph Borell from Spain is succeeding Pat Cox as President of the Parliament.

1'56

Question,

The Parliament has a role of making laws and one of controlling things. I would like to place the controlling in future at the public, the press.

2'26

Answer, Joost Lagendijk, Member of the Parliament, The Greens, Brussels:

It's not possible, and I don't think, it's a thing we want. In a way it's like at a national level. We make laws and we control the Commission. The Commission is in a way the government. So the national parliament does the same, so why should the European Parliament be different?

2'47

SIGN:

The European Parliament has offices in France, Belgium and Luxembourg

2'58

Question,

Why do we discuss and debate that much about their salaries and fees for transport and so on?

3'10

Answer, Joost Lagendijk, Member of the Parliament, The Greens, Brussels:

I understand the bad reputation of the Parliament on that field. I think, that my group, the Greens together with the liberals and the socialists we have been fighting for a way of dealing with such issues. If somebody travels to Brussels or to Strasbourg he has to give us the ticket and we will refund it. Now we have another system, which we would desperately like to change. People get more now than they spend on the ticket, and I think this is an un-going battle and I think, we will be able to change in the next Parliament. I really hope that we will manage to change the system in future. Because it makes people suspicious about what we do