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First of all, I would like to thank Professor Maurer and Michael Wolf for this thought- and action- provoking study and presentation. It is, indeed, highly appreciated. The right of initiative is an important part of the unfinished business essential for the future of Europe. But the institutional balance is not a purely constitutional issue, in reality it is at the confluence of the constitutional and the political.

I think it is important to put the question of the EP right of initiative in a context. I have often heard a claim that the European Parliament is not a real parliament because it has only an indirect right of initiative. I am not really a big fan of reaching out to this argument. The European Union's institutional design is not a large-scale model of how things work at the national level. It is a creation sui generis and powers and relations between institutions had been initially carefully balanced. But evolution of this balance has led to institutional distortions. Also the world has changed influencing our reflection.

I agree with what comes from Professor Maurer's presentation. It reveals very well, that in the context of change this Parliament has not been powerless in terms of legislative initiative. When reflecting on the right of initiative one needs to look more closely at the power balance between all institutions. The European Parliament has developed over time the practice of reaching out to all sorts of proxy tools.

This also means that when touching the evolving power balance, we need to have a watchful eye on the consequences of unconventional measures used. I agree with

Professor Maurer's analysis that there have been interferences in the Commission's power of legislative initiative. We could see, in particular in the last decade, rather effective efforts from the European Council side undermining the community method.

Of course, the relations between the institutions evolve over time. The guidance role of the European Council was, nevertheless, never meant to override the competences of the Commission and the co-legislators and yet this is what we have been witnessing. So when evaluating the options to strengthen the EP's right of initiative, I would see justified to keep the overall balance of the institutional architecture in mind.

I agree we need to look into not only the constitutional and institutional implications of the EP's right of initiative. There would be obviously also political ones. Professor Maurer suggested in his presentation that the European Parliament could decide to 'sponsor' and lend support to suggestions from the Economic and Social Committee or the Committee of the Regions for legislative initiatives. Let me add that the EP already plays an important role in channelling requests for legislative action from citizens.

Whenever the Parliament requests from the Commission to submit legislative proposals, be they in the form of own initiative or legislative own initiative reports, we can see that these often take up issues that the Commission had not yet tackled, or not with sufficient vigour. An example could be EP demands to the Commission to put forward a 'Women on boards' proposal.

One more issue I would like to highlight is the follow up to our requests. We know that the Commission President von der Leyen's pledge to put forward a legislative proposal in response to our request if this House adopts a resolution requesting the Commission to submit a legislative proposal is not the end of the road. Of course it is politically important that the Commission follows up on Parliament's requests because it allows the Parliament to tackle regulatory deficiencies. But it is important to underline that targeted legislative action will only ensue if the Council can be brought on board. This Committee knows all too well the difficulties of pushing through a proposal when the requirement on the Council end is to reach unanimity. It seems important to me to draw conclusions from past experiences and see what we

can learn from them in order to better prepare for an EP right of initiative that fully comes to fruition and culminates in new legislation, achieving real change.

Let me finish underlying once again that this study is extremely helpful. It deepens understanding of institutional mechanism in action. This is important if we really aim at an effective right of initiative.