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

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Abstract

It has been argued that public engagement in democracies has declined in the last decades due to a growing disconnect between citizens and their representatives. The European Union is a case in point, if not the most prominent example of an institution seen as suffering from a "democratic deficit". Even the directly elected members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are often accused of being disconnected from the interests of European citizens. However, little is actually known about whether European legislators respond to their voters' interests when making critical policy choices. We address this question by studying the determinants of MEPs' votes on the approval of EU trade agreements. Against widespread Eurosceptic arguments, we find that these votes reflect the trade policy interests of MEPs' constituencies. The results are robust to controlling for a rich set of variables and fixed effects to account for potential confounding factors, and using different sets of votes and econometric methodologies. An instrumental variable approach supports a causal interpretation of our findings.

JEL Classifications: F13, D72.

Keywords: EU Democratic Deficit, European Parliament, Roll-call Votes, Trade Agreements.

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1 Introduction

It has been argued that public engagement in democracies has declined in the last decades due to a growing disconnect between citizens and their representatives (e.g., Flinders, 2015; Foa *et al.*, 2016; Fisher, 2018). The European Union (EU) and its institutions have been the target of such criticism, with the EU being accused of suffering from a "democratic deficit." Even the members of the European Parliament (MEPs), who are directly elected by the EU citizens, are portrayed as unaccountable bureaucrats who do not represent the interests of their electorate.[1] These arguments have played a key role in the Brexit campaign,[2] and are commonly summoned by populist politicians who uphold a denigratory vision of elites in Europe and elsewhere and depict them as corrupt and distant from the wishes of the people (e.g., Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022; Bellodi *et al.*, 2023). They are also common among scholars, who emphasize that there is "only a weak connection between voter preferences and EP decision-making" due to the second-order nature of European elections (Hobolt and Franklin, 2011).[3]

While Eurosceptic arguments are widespread, there is surprisingly little evidence on whether European legislators are responsive to their voters' interests when making key policy choices. This is the first paper this question, by systematically studying the determinants of MEPs' votes on the approval of trade agreements between 2009 and 2020.

There are five reasons for focusing on trade agreements. First, the Common Commercial Policy is an exclusive competence of the EU, enshrined in Article 207 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). Second, the EU is a key player in trade policy and has the largest network of trade agreements in the world, with more than 40 agreements fully in force or

[1] For instance, see "Elected, yet strangely unaccountable" (*The Economist*, May 15, 2014). At the same time, the article points out that "the desire for more democratic accountability has meant that every successive treaty has increased the European Parliament's powers. Today it is in almost all respects a co-equal legislator with the national governments that meet in the Council of Ministers. 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".

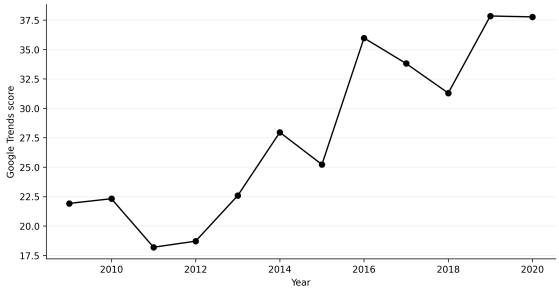
[2] "Britain's self-ejection from Europe is the culmination not just of four months of heady campaigning but four decades of latent Euroscepticism. (...) It has become a tenet of Euroscepticism that the union is too remote from the people it is governing" ("How did UK end up voting to leave the European Union?" *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016). See Figures A-1 and A-2 for coverage of the EU democratic deficit and Euroscepticism in the media and scholarly literature. See De Vries (2018) for an extensive analysis of different forms of Euroscepticism.

[3] Some have argued that European citizens have no shared interests and identity (Weiler *et al.*, 1995) and that low turnout in European elections is driven by the second-order nature of European elections, which are fought in the shadow of main (first-order) national elections. Other scholars instead point out that European citizens have much in common — sharing similar constitutional and democratic principles — and that the European Parliament features the same left-right divide that exists in all the member states (Hix, 2008).

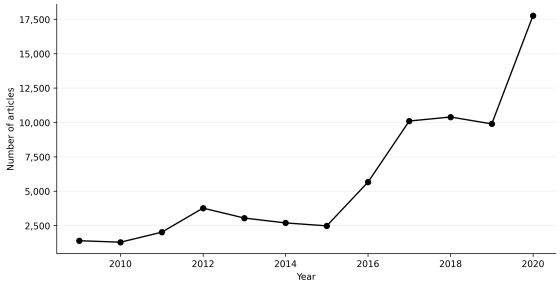
provisionally applied and many more being negotiated. Third, since the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, the entry into force of trade agreements requires the approval of MEPs.[4]

Figure 1
Salience of trade policy

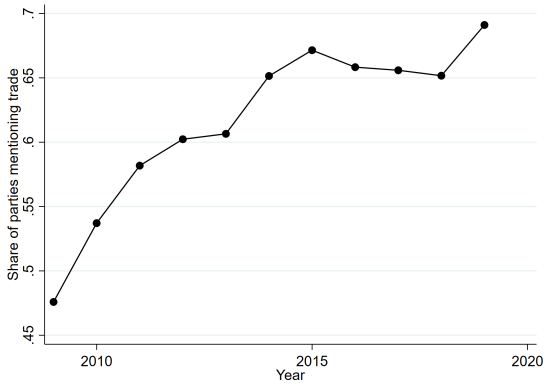
(a) Internet searches on trade agreements (Google Trends)



(b) Media coverage of trade agreements (Factiva)



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



Notes: Figure (a) reports an aggregate Google Trends score for the topic "Trade agreement" in EU member states. This is a weighted average of the yearly Google Trends score for each member state (using population as weights). Figure (b) shows the number of articles found on Factiva in all EU member states that include the term "Trade agreement." Figure (c) plots the share of European political parties that that mention trade in their electoral program, using data from the Manifesto Project.

Forth, trade agreements are increasingly salient to EU citizens, as illustrated by Figure 1. This shows that the volume of internet searches related to trade agreements, the media coverage of trade agreements, and the share of European political parties that mention trade policy in their electoral program have all increased significantly over the sample period covered in our data.[5] The salience of EU trade agreements can be also illustrated by movements

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

[5] The figure in panel (c) 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

and campaigns, such as the "Stop CETA and TTIP!" organized during the negotiations of the agreements with Canada and the United States, as well as the ongoing protests against the EU-Mercosur agreement. Finally, there is an ample literature showing that trade shocks matter for politics (e.g., Autor *et al.*, 2020; Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b; Che *et al.*, 2022), but little is known about whether representatives react to the trade interests of their constituencies.

To study the link between the voting behavior of EU legislators and the interests of their constituents, we construct a new dataset of roll-call votes on the approval of the 15 trade agreements adopted by the EU since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (see Figure 3 in Section 2). We combine these data with information on the trade policy interests of MEPs' constituents and other factors that might shape voting patterns in the EP.

To measure the trade policy interests, we construct the export ratio of a constituency as the ratio of employment in export-oriented sectors and employment in import-competing sectors, where we use aggregate international trade data to classify industries as export-oriented or import-competing. This measure is meant to capture the extent to which voters in a constituency should gain or lose from trade agreements.[6] We also collect systematic information on other covariates, 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 also collect systematic information on other variables that can affect MEPs' voting, 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).

Our main finding is that European legislators respond to their constituents' interests when voting on trade agreements: MEPs representing constituencies with a higher share of jobs in export-oriented as compared to import-competing industries are more likely to vote in favor of a trade agreement. The results are robust to including a rich set of controls and different types of fixed effects (i.e., agreement, European political party, constituency, MEP). We also implement an instrumental variable strategy to address any remaining concerns about the endogeneity of the export-oriented/import-competing composition of the local economies (e.g., a potential correlation between employment in trade-exposed sectors and

European parties that mention trade in their program.

[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 group to avoid the "backlash of globalization" (Colantone *et al.*, 2022).

unobserved factors like cultural traits or shocks affecting constituencies). The instrument exploits data on the allocation of employment in non-EU OECD countries. The logic behind the instrument is that, while being uncorrelated with regional shocks in employment and local politics, changes in employment shares in other countries capture global shocks affecting industries (e.g., technological shocks) and, thus, employment levels in these industries. The results support a causal interpretation of our findings.

In terms of magnitude, our baseline estimates imply that a one standard deviation increase in the export ratio raises the probability of a vote in favor of a trade agreement by 4.24 percentage points. Using these estimates, we can carry out counterfactual experiments to predict how MEPs would have voted under a different distribution of export ratios. For example, a 20% decrease in the export ratio would lead 17 MEPs to switch to a negative vote on the agreement with Canada. A 50% decrease would instead lead 41 MEPs changing to a negative vote on the agreement. Using the data from Conconi *et al.* (2014) on the approval of trade agreements in the US Congress, we find that changes in constituencies' trade policy interests have qualitatively and quantitatively similar effects on the voting behavior of European and US legislators.

We discuss and rule out two alternative interpretations of our findings. First, a large literature shows that politicians tend to favor the regions in which they are born (e.g., Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Burgess *et al.*, 2015). One may be concerned that our results could not be driven by MEPs responding to the interests of EU constituency, but by the interests of their birth region. We show that, even when excluding the region in which EU legislators were born, their voting behavior depends on the trade policy interests of the EU constituency they represent. Second, we rule out that our results are driven by the pressure from lobby groups. There is evidence that large firms dominate lobbying on trade policy (e.g., Kim 2018; Osgood, 2017, Blanga-Gubbay *et al.*, 2023). We show that our results are robust to controlling for the presence of large firms in the constituency of the MEPs.

Our paper contributes to two main strands of the literature. The first examines whether elected representatives respond 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.[7] We are the first to study MEPs' votes on a key policy issue — the approval of trade agreements — and whether they are shaped by the interests of their electorate.

We also contribute to the literature on the political economy of trade policy. Much of the focus in this literature is on 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). Very few studies examine the role of electoral incentives (Conconi *et al.*, 2014) and swing-state politics (Bown *et al.*, 2023). Much of the focus of this literature is on the United States. Data availability has so far prevented systematic work on European trade policy.[8] We overcome this limitation by constructing a large dataset of MEPs' votes on the approval of 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

Our analysis uses and constructs data at several geographic levels. In what follows, we discuss the various geographic aggregates used in the analysis.

NUTS regions The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) is a hierarchical system that divides EU member states' and UK's territory into regions for statistical purposes. The standard, first adopted by the EU in 2003, has been revised several times. In our analysis, we use the 2016 version.

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

[7] A few studies examine votes in the EP before the Liston Treaty (e.g., Hix *et al.*, 2006; Hix and Noury, 2007). Other authors study votes in the European Council (e.g., Mattila, 2009; Hagemann *et al.*, 2016).

[8] 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).

remaining member states, the number of NUTS-2 regions can vary from two (i.e., Croatia and Slovenia) to 38 (i.e., Germany).

Eurostat and Eurobarometer publications report data at different levels of aggregation over time. For consistency reasons, 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.[9]
- 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, therefore, use county-level population data to construct fixed-boundary NUTS-2 regions over time.[10]
- Slovenia's NUTS-2 borders changed in the 2013 version of the NUTS classification. As we couldn't find a clear method of converting 2010 NUTS-2 regions into 2013 NUTS-2 regions, 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.[11]

Overall, our dataset includes 262 NUTS-2 regions.

European constituencies The European Electoral Act of 2002 allows countries to establish sub-national constituencies for the purpose of electing MEPs. Figure 2 shows the EP constituencies in the seventh, eighth, and ninth legislatures. Notice that most member states choose to operate a single, national constituency.

[9]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).

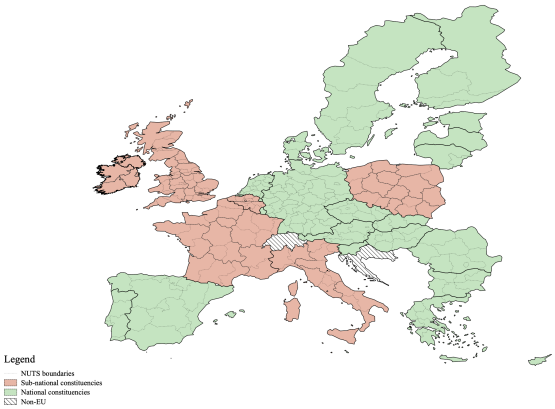
[10]We first use Census data to obtain population counts at the county level. We then compute the share of every old NUTS-2 region that belongs to a new NUTS-2 region. We finally use these shares to split old NUTS-2 regions across new NUTS-2 regions.

[11]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).

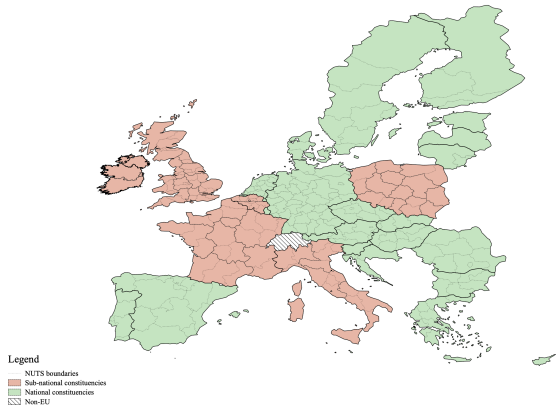
Figure 2

European constituencies and NUTS-2 regions

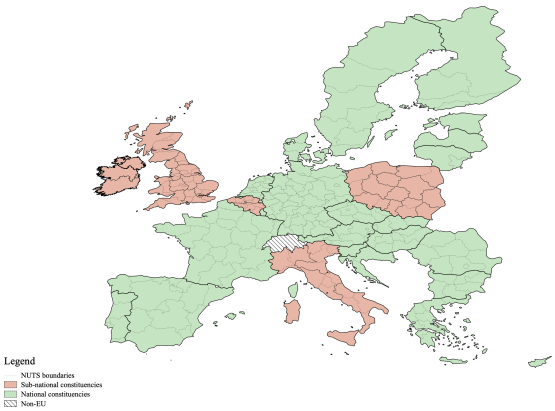
(a) 7th legislature



(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.

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.[12]

- 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.[13]

- 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. Because the 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.

National constituencies We also identify, for those MEPs who ran for parliament in their home country, the constituencies which they sought to represent. Most of the time, these constituencies are contained within or overlap with NUTS-2 regions.[14] Table A-1 provides more information on the data used to construct the national constituencies in each EU member state.

[12] Around 90% of the residents of the Brussels-Capital Region vote for the French-speaking candidate list.

[13] As Eurobarometer is not conducted in the Overseas Territories, we drop the Overseas constituency.

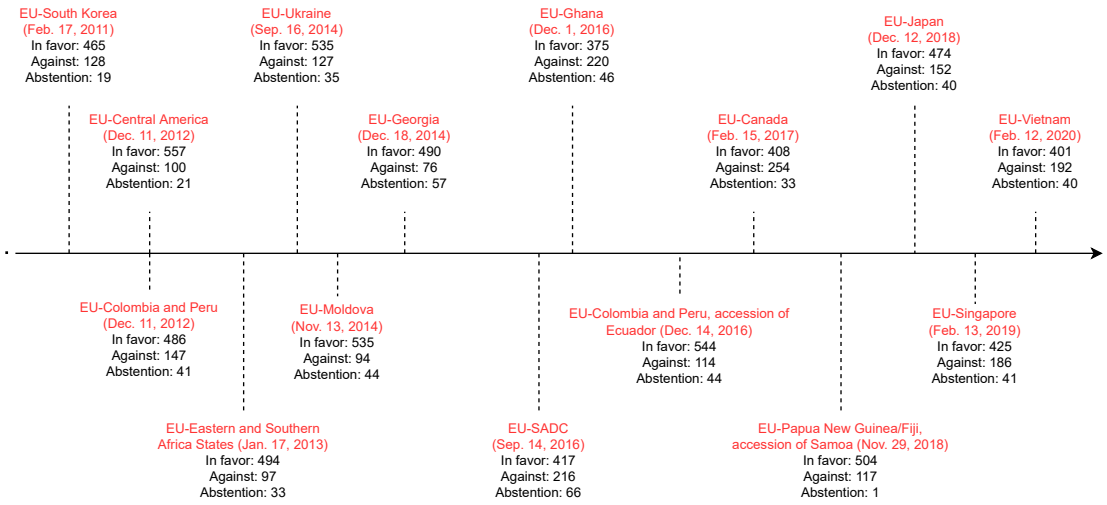
[14] Slovakia and the Netherlands are not divided into sub-national constituencies and elect their legislators at the national level. We, therefore, exclude them from the analysis. We also exclude those countries that consist of one NUTS-2 region only.

2.2 Roll-call votes on trade agreements

We use web automation to collect official documents that report the outcome of all roll-call votes that took place in the EP between 2009 and 2020.[15] We parse the documents and extract the names of the MEPs attending the vote, how they voted (i.e., in favor, against, or abstained), and the European political party with which they were affiliated.[16]

Figure 3

Roll-call votes on the approval of EU trade agreements



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

We focus on post-Lisbon Treaty votes on the free trade agreements (FTAs) negotiated by the EU. Figure 3 shows the 15 FTAs that are included in our sample. We drop from the final sample MEPs who did not vote on any trade agreement (2 MEPs), 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 9,851 votes (567 of which were abstentions) and 1,646 MEPs (32 of whom always abstained).

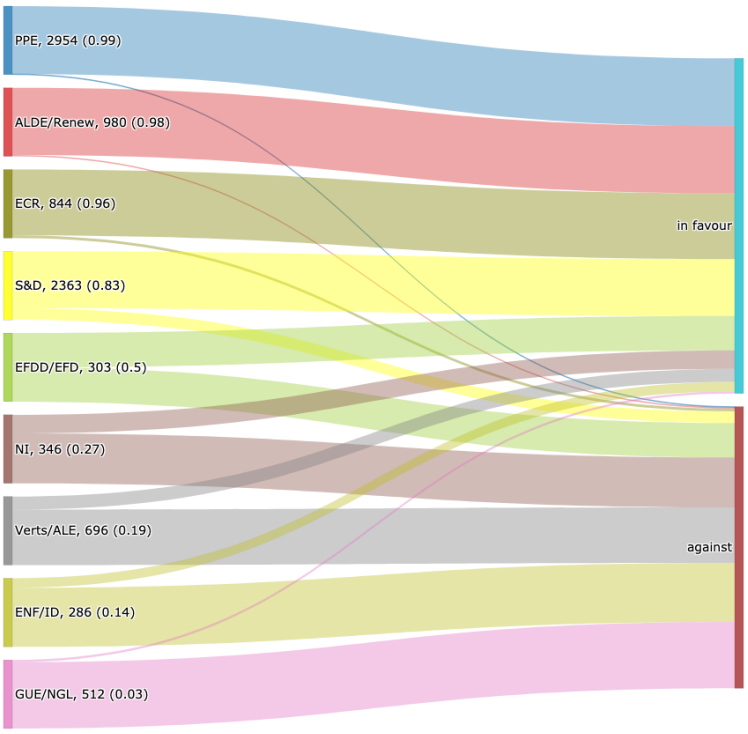
[15] We use the Python library Scrapy to iterate over all webpages of the EP that include reports of roll-call votes. The scraper starts from the first sitting of the ninth legislature on July 14, 2009, and ends with the July 23, 2020 sitting of the eleventh legislature. An example of a report can be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

[16] We use the Python library Pandoc to convert the previously downloaded documents into a format that allows for text analysis. We then use the library Beautifulsoup to parse the documents and extract the necessary information.

Individual MEPs tend to vote in accordance with the European political party with which they are affiliated. There is, however, deviation from the party line, as Figure 4 illustrates.

Figure 4

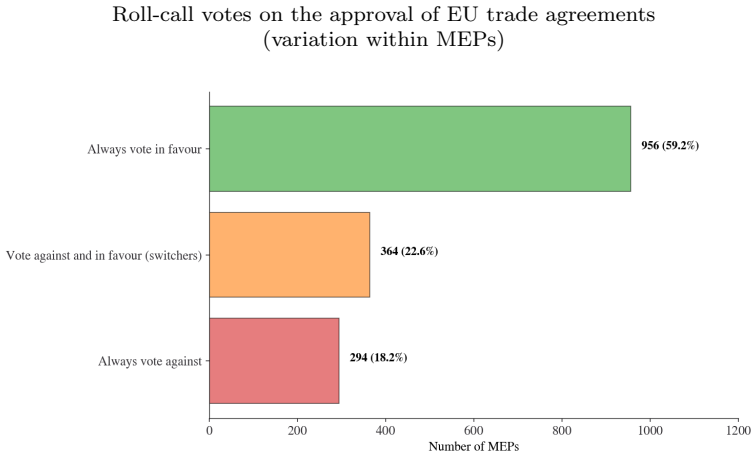
Roll-call votes on the approval of EU trade agreements
(variation within European political parties)



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

Moreover, there is variation within the voting behavior of MEPs over time as well. Looking at the MEPs in our sample, 956 (294) always voted "in favor" ("against"), while 364 switched voted both in favor and against a trade agreement during their tenure in the EP (see Figure 5). In our analysis, we will show that part of the cross-legislator and within-legislator variation in voting behavior reflects variation in the trade policy interests of the EU constituencies the MEP represented.

Figure 5



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

2.3 MEP characteristics

We further gather information on a number of MEP characteristics. First, we provide MEPs' names and country of birth as inputs to an AI-powered service to identify their gender.[17]

Second, we use information on the birth year, scraped from each MEP's official EU website, to compute their age. Third, Michon and Wiest (2021) have created an extensive dataset on the political activity of MEPs during their career in the EP. We use this information to compute MEPs' tenure.

We also recover from their database each MEP's place of birth, which we geocode using Google's API service. Using the geographic coordinates of each location, we match each MEP's city of birth to a NUTS-2 region. For MEPs who were either born outside the European Union or in a different country than the one they represented in the EP we mark the city of birth as missing. We can match 1,444 MEPs to a region of birth.

Lastly, we scraped 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 then use a matching algorithm to identify those MEPs who also ran for office in a general election. We can thus identify, for a subset of MEPs (871, 52.91%), the region they sought to represent in the national parliament. We also identify those MEPs who succeeded in winning a seat (478, 29.04%). Considering regional parliaments leads to a slightly larger

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

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

subset of MEPs who held an elected position in their home country (549, 33.35%).[19] Table A-1 provides additional information on the construction of this dataset, while Table A-6 displays summary statistics for the MEP characteristics.

2.4 Constituency characteristics

2.4.1 Trade policy interests

Employment We collect data on employment at the NUTS-2 level. From Eurostat's Structural Business Statistics (SBS) series, we obtain the number of persons employed in 67 two-digit NACE Rev. 2 sectors.[20] 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.[21] 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 is

$$Emp_{jr} = \frac{Emp_{jr}^{SBS}}{\sum_i Emp_{ir}^{SBS}} Emp_{jr}^{LFS}, \tag{1}$$

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.

Trade flows We obtain bilateral trade flows at the product level from the BACI dataset (Gaulier and Zignago, 2010).[22] The data cover trade flows between 230 countries and span the period from 2005 to 2020. The 2002 HS classification is used in 2005 and 2006, while the remaining years use the 2007 version. We use correspondence tables provided by the UN

[19] We only consider regional parliaments in Belgium, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

[20] 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.

[21] 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).

[22] The BACI dataset reports trade flows at the 6-digit level using the Harmonized System (HS) classification. For example, product code 04.06.20 corresponds to *"Dairy produce; cheese of all kinds, grated or powdered"*.

Statistics Division to convert the data from the 2002 to the 2007 classification.[23] We then use correspondence tables to match HS 2007 six-digit product codes to two-digit sectors in the NACE Rev. 2 nomenclature.[24,25,26] We also obtain bilateral data for trade in services, which are used in a robustness check, from the WTO-OECD Balanced Trade in Services (BaTiS) dataset.[27] The data cover trade in services for over 200 trade partners between 2005 and 2019. 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. The classification used is the Extended Balance of Payments Services classification (EBOPS) of 2010, which we manually assign to NACE Rev. 2 sector codes using the matching described in Table A-5.

Export ratio To capture a constituency's trade policy interests, we measure the ratio of its employment in export-oriented sectors to employment in import-competing sectors. Below we describe the several steps we follow to construct this measure.

First, using aggregate trade data, we define the dummy variable $X_{j,k,t}$, which is equal to 1 if country k's total exports in industry j in year t exceed its total imports in that industry. In line with Conconi *et al.* (2012, 2014), we use this variable to identify comparative advantage (export-oriented) vs disadvantage (import-competing) sectors.[28] To account for potential measurement error and better gauge trends in trade flows, we fit linear time trends to imports and exports.

Figure 6 illustrates the procedure for three manufacturing sectors in Germany. In sector C14 (manufacture of wearing apparel), Germany is a net importer throughout the sample

[23] Product codes may change from one classification to another. When one code is associated with several codes in the new classification, we split trade flows equally between all matched codes. We then collapsed the data at the product level in order to obtain one bilateral trade flow for each product code. The correspondence table was downloaded from here.

[24] 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.

[25] We also use Pierce and Schott (2012)'s correspondence tables for the sectors that fail to be matched in the preceding steps.

[26] For example, HS product 04.06.20, (*"Dairy produce; cheese of all kinds, grated or powdered"*), is matched to NACE sector C10, (*"Manufacture of food products"*).

[27] We use the version of the dataset released in 2021. The most recent version is available here.

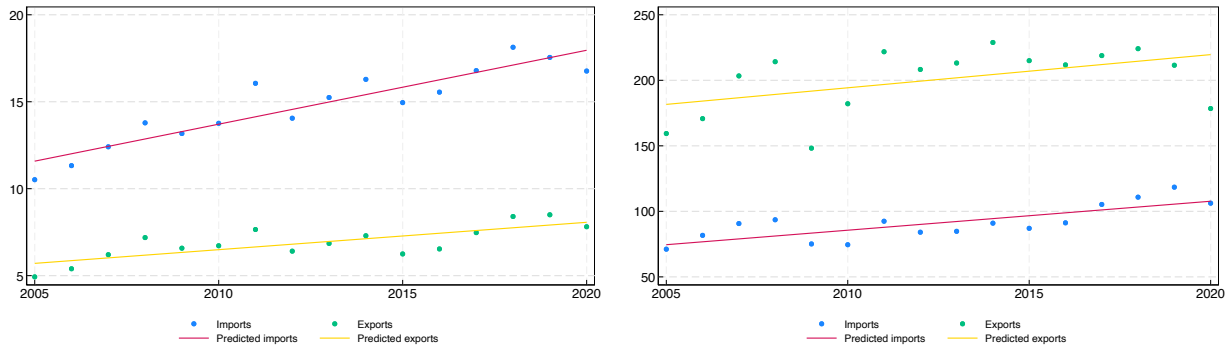
[28] We define the export ratio using information on aggregate rather than bilateral trade flows. There are two main reasons for this. First, even before MEPs vote on the approval of a trade agreement, trade flows between the EU and the FTA partner(s) can change in anticipation of the vote. Second, bilateral trade flows between FTA members are more likely to lead to measurement error, since they are contaminated by differences in pre-agreement tariffs and by the introduction of rules of origin (e.g., Conconi *et al.*, 2018). This would make it harder to identify the underlying patterns of comparative advantage.

Figure 6

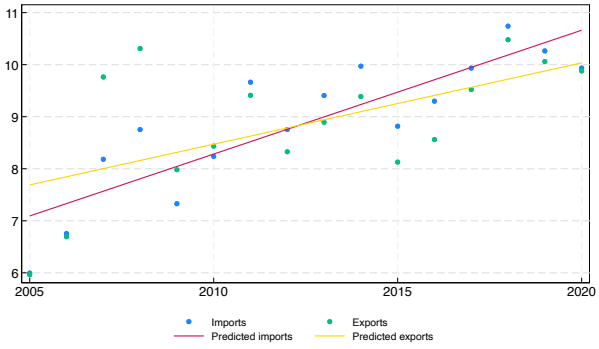
Classifying industries - an example

(a) C14: Wearing apparel

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



(c) C16: Wood and products of wood and cork



Notes: This figure provides an example of the methodology used to classify an industry as export-oriented or import-competing. In sector C14, Germany is a net importer throughout the period. The sector is classified as import-competing. By contrast, Germany's exports exceed its imports in sector C29. This sector is classified as export-oriented. Fitting linear time trends does not affect the classification in these two instances. In sector C16, Germany's imports were larger than its exports in 2005 and 2006. The trend reverses for the next four years, after which Germany reverts to being a net importer. Fitting a linear, however, implies only one switch that occurs between 2012 and 2013.

period. C14 is, therefore, classified as import-competing. Exports in sector C29 (manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers, and semi-trailers), on the other hand, exceed imports, and the sector is classified as export-oriented. The use of linear time trends does not affect how we classify industries in these two cases. The picture looks more complicated for sector C16 (manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials). Germany starts by importing slightly more than it exports. The trend reverses in 2007 for the next four years, after which Germany becomes once again a net importer. Fitting linear time trends allows for only one switch to occur

(around 2012).

Second, combining the dummy variable $X_{j,k,t}$ with sector-level employment as defined in (1), we can compute the export ratio as

$$Export\ Ratio_{r(k),t} \equiv \frac{\sum_j X_{j,k,t} * Emp_{j,r(k),t}}{\sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,t}) * Emp_{j,r(k),t}}. \tag{2}$$

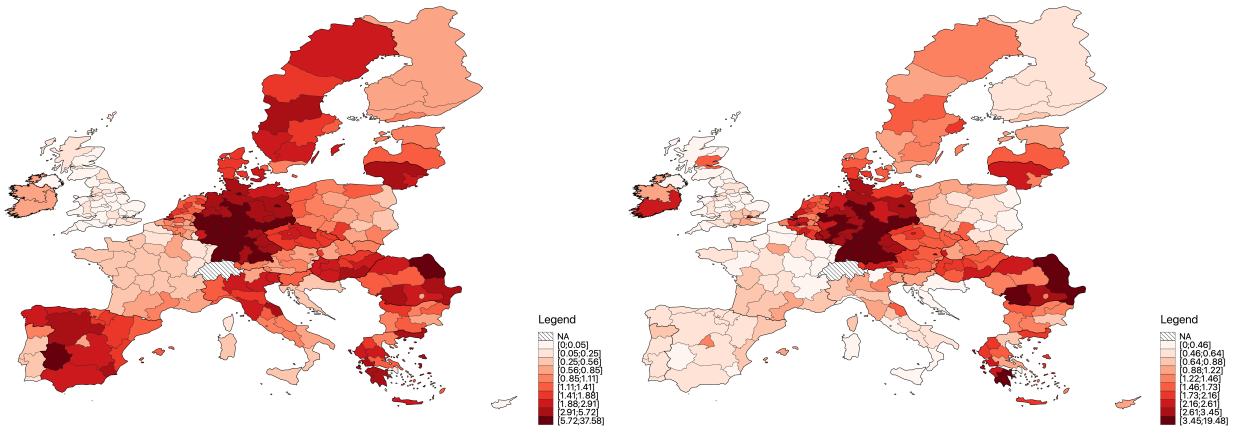
This is the ratio between total employment in export-oriented industries and total employment in import-competing industries in region r of country k.

Figure 7 plots the export ratio across the 267 NUTS-2 regions included in our sample, averaged from 2009 to 2020. Figure 7a shows the export-ratio computed using tradable goods only (i.e., agriculture, mining, and manufacturing), whereas Figure 7b also includes several services for which trade data are available. Several patterns stand out. First, German regions tend to have the highest export ratios, whether tradable services are included in the construction of the measure or not. The United Kingdom and France typically exhibit smaller export ratios. Second, including trade in services improves the export competitiveness of certain regions specialized in the service sector, such as London, the south of Ireland, or Brussels.

Figure 7

Average export ratio across NUTS-2 regions, 2009-2020

(a) Export ratio for tradable goods (b) Export ratio for tradable goods and services



Notes: This figure shows the spatial distribution of the average export ratio across NUTS-2 regions between 2009 and 2020. Darker shades of red correspond to greater export ratios.

The export ratio of European constituency c can be similarly constructed:

$$Export\ Ratio_{c(k),t} \equiv \frac{\sum_j X_{j,k,t} * Emp_{j,c(k),t}}{\sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,t}) * Emp_{j,c(k),t}}, \tag{3}$$

where the numerator (denominator) is the total employment in export-oriented (import-competing) sectors in constituency c in country k. Notice that for most countries, the constituency is the entire country (see Figure 2).

As discussed in Section 4.3, we can alternatively construct the trade ratio at the level of the national party of each MEP, combining the regional export ratio defined in equation (2) with the share of votes obtained by each party in different regions. We also construct two "parochial" trade measures, which capture the trade policy interests of the region in which MEPs were born or which they represented in national elections (see Section **??**).

Non-EU employment As explained in Section 4.1, to construct an instrumental variable for the export ratio, we use 2-digit ISIC Rev. 4 employment data in non-EU OECD countries from the International Labour Organization (ILO).[29] Because employment data are not available for some non-EU OECD countries, we restrict the analysis to Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States.[30] We split the sample into two income groups, based on the World Bank classification: high-income (Iceland, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States) and upper-middle-income countries (Mexico and Turkey). We construct the variable $Emp_{j,g,t}$, which is equal to the average share of employment in 2-digit NACE sector j across non-EU OECD countries belonging to income group g in year t.

Trade opinions We also use data from the Eurobarometer to create measures of preferences for free trade at the constituency level. The Eurobarometer asks respondents whether the words "free trade" bring to mind something very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative, or very negative. For each constituency c in country k, we construct $Pro\text{-}Trade\ Opinions_{c(k),t}$ as the share of respondents for whom "free trade" conjures a very positive or fairly positive image.

It is important to note that the question about preferences for free trade is only asked

[29] The list of non-EU28 OECD members includes Australia, Canada, Chile, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States.

[30] Canada and New Zealand are not in the ILO dataset. For other countries (Israel, Chile, and Republic of Korea), the employment data are missing for many years and sectors. For Australia, the data is provided using a different sector classification.

in a select number of years (2009 and 2014 through 2019). For trade agreements that were voted in years when the Eurobarometer did not ask this question, we use the most recent available share.

2.5 Socio-economic covariates

We use additional Eurostat publications to compute several socio-economic covariates. For each constituency, we 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 regional unemployment rates. We also construct 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 a constituency.[31]

2.6 Political covariates

We use Eurobarometer data 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. Table A-7 presents descriptive statistics for EU constituencies.

3 Electoral data

We also collect data on the final results of all European elections that took place since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Specifically, we retrieve the number of votes each party obtained in each NUTS-2 region. Table A-3 presents detailed information on how European elections are run across the 27 EU members states and the United Kingdom.

[31] The data 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 ratio, this variable does not include agriculture, forestry, and fishing.

4 Are MEPs responsive to constituencies' interests?

4.1 Identification strategy

Regression model We study the determinants of MEPs' voting patterns on trade agreements by estimating the following regression model:

$$Prob(Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)} = 1) = F\big(\beta_0 + \beta_1 Export\ Ratio_{c,t-1} + \beta_2 Z_{i,t} + \beta_3 Z_{c,t} + \delta_a + \delta_p + \varepsilon_{i(c,p),a(t)}\big), \quad (4)$$

where $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$ is equal to 1 if MEP i, elected in constituency c, and belonging to European political party p, votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. In the baseline specification, we disregard abstentions. Because the dependent variable is binary, we estimate equation (4) by logit. F, therefore, denotes the cumulative standard logistic distribution. We report robust standard errors clustered at the MEP level for all specifications.

The independent variable of interest is the export ratio of the constituency in which the MEP was elected, as defined in equation (3). We always use the export ratio in the year preceding the vote to deal with concerns about reverse causality.

We also address concerns about omitted variable bias by controlling for various MEP- and constituency-specific characteristics 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_{ct} is a vector of pre-determined socio-economic (the share of the population with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, the urbanization rate) and political (ideological positioning of the constituency, trust in political parties, trust in the EU) covariates interacted with year fixed effects. δ_a is an agreement-specific fixed effect that controls for all characteristics that would make an agreement easier to adopt. δ_p is a European party-specific fixed effect. Its inclusion allows us to control in a flexible way for the overall positioning of a party with respect to trade policy. In robustness checks, we also consider specifications that include MEP-specific fixed effects. The use of these effects, while extremely demanding, allows us to account for any time-invariant observable MEP characteristics that could affect their voting behavior.[32]

Instrumental variable Despite including a rich set of covariates and fixed effects, we cannot rule out the possibility that export ratios are correlated with unobserved constituency characteristics that also shape MEPs' voting patterns. To address such concerns, we adopt

[32]Note that in these specifications, the MEP characteristics $Z_{i,t}$ are dropped due to collinearity with the MEP- and agreement-specific fixed effects.

an instrumental variable approach. To understand our IV approach, remember that the export ratio is made of two elements: we first classify industries as export-oriented and import-competing, and then use employment data in these industries to compute the index. Thus, ideally, we want to exploit exogenous variation along both dimensions.

Concerning the industry classification, one potential concern is that aggregate trade flows include imports from and exports to the future FTA partners. The classification of industries may thus be correlated with bilateral trade costs, especially in the case of large countries like Japan or South Korea. To mitigate such concerns, we exclude trade flows with the future FTA partner when classifying industries. We denote by $X_{j,k,a(t)}$ the indicator variable that takes the value 1 if industry j in country k is export-oriented in year t, and 0 otherwise. Notice that the classification varies across agreements since we exclude trade flows with the future FTA partner a.

The allocation of employment across sectors can be subject to constituency-specific shocks, which the MEPs may take into account when deciding whether to vote in favor or against a trade agreement. To isolate exogenous variation in the allocation of employment, we follow the approach an approach similar to Autor *et al.* (2013) and Colantone and Stanig (2018b), comparing EU member states to similar countries. Specifically, we match EU member states to non-EU OECD countries that belong to the same income group, as defined by the World Bank in 2008.[33] For each constituency c (in country k, belonging to income group g), we instrument the employment variable in equation (3) with $Emp_{j,g,t}$. As discussed in Section 2, this is the average share of employment in sector j across non-EU OECD countries belonging to income group g in year t.[34] We argue that the evolution of these shares over the sample period captures broader trends in the global economy (e.g., technological shocks) and is unlikely to be correlated with local shocks affecting EU constituencies.

In light of this discussion, the instrumental variable for the export ratio of constituency c (in country k belonging to income group g) is:

$$Export\ Ratio\ IV_{c(k(g)),a(t)} \equiv \frac{\sum_j X_{j,k,a(t)} * Emp_{j,g,t}}{\sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,a(t)}) * Emp_{j,g,t}}. \tag{5}$$

[33] Based on the World Bank classification, five countries were upper-middle income in 2008 (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania), while the remaining EU member states were classified as high-income. The classification can be found here.

[34] Note that the export ratio defined in (3) can be re-written in terms of employment shares:

$$Export\ Ratio_{c(k),t} \equiv \frac{\sum_j X_{j,k,t} Emp_{j,c(k),t}}{\sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,t}) Emp_{j,c(k),t}} = \frac{\sum_j X_{j,k,t} \frac{Emp_{j,c(k),t}}{Emp_{c(k),t}}}{\sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,t}) \frac{Emp_{j,c(k),t}}{Emp_{c(k),t}}} = \frac{\sum_j X_{j,k,t} \%\ Emp_{j,c(k),t}}{\sum_j (1 - X_{j,k,t}) \%\ Emp_{j,c(k),t}}.$$

Several qualifications are in order. First, we apply the same non-EU sector shares to all EU member states belonging to the same income group. Variation across countries within an income group g in year t is therefore driven by the industry classification identifiers, $X_{j,k,a(t)}$. Second, variation over time in the instrument comes both from changes in the allocation of labor across industries in non-EU countries (i.e., $Emp_{j,g,t}$) and changes in the industry classification (i.e., $X_{j,k,a(t)}$).

We implement our instrumental variable approach using a two-step procedure. In the first step, we use least squares to regress the potentially endogenous export ratios on the instrumental variable and the set of covariates and fixed effects. In the second step, we re-estimate equation (4) by logit while also controlling for the residual obtained in the first step.

4.2 Main results

Table 1 reports the marginal effects of the export ratio on the probability of voting in favor of an FTA. The point estimate in column 1 corresponds to the most parsimonious specification of equation (4) and only includes agreement- and European party-specific fixed effects. We find that higher export ratios are associated with a higher probability of voting in favor of an FTA. The effect is statistically significant at the 1% level.

The specification in column 2 adds MEP controls. The marginal effect of the export ratio 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. In both specifications, the marginal effect of the export ratio is positive and statistically significant at the 1%. Column 5, which corresponds to our preferred specification, also 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. The marginal effect of the export ratio on MEP's votes is positive and significant. In terms of magnitude, we find that a one standard deviation (2.02) increase in the export ratio raises the probability of a vote in favor of an FTA by 4.24 percentage points.

We can use the estimates from column 5 to carry out counterfactual experiments. Specifically, we compute the probability of voting in favor of an FTA if the export ratio of all constituencies is subject to a negative shock. We then count the number of MEPs who are likely to switch their votes under this counterfactual, that is, the number of MEPs for whom the probability of voting in favor of an FTA decreases below 0.5 following the shock. For

Table 1

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituencies

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.007***	0.007***	0.006***	0.007***	0.021***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.006)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749	0.748	0.749	0.747

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in EU constituency c, and belonging to European political party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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.

example, a 20% decrease in *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ would lead to 17 MEPs switching to a negative vote on the agreements with Canada. A 50% decrease in *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ would induce 41 MEPS to change their vote to a negative one.

It is interesting to compare the results of Table 1 with the corresponding results for the United States. Using data from Conconi *et al.* (2014) on the approval of US trade agreements, we find that the effects in the US Congress are qualitatively and quantitatively similar to those in the European Parliament: a one standard deviation (0.54) increase in the export ratio of a US constituency (congressional district or state) increases by 3.29 percentage points the probability that its representative (in the House or Senate) votes in favor of a free trade agreement. These estimates are obtained in a specification similar to our baseline, which includes various controls for MEP and constituency characteristics, as well as party, agreement and constituency fixed effects (see column 5 of Table A-8 in the Appendix).

In Table 2, we further report results from regressions that include MEP-specific 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 ratio is identified only by variation within the 364 MEPs who voted both in favor and against an FTA during their tenure in the EP (i.e., the switchers).[35] Notice that the sample is significantly reduced as compared to Table 1. The coefficients on the export ratio remain positive and statistically significant at the 1% level

Table 2

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.478***	0.631***	0.975***
	(0.139)	(0.151)	(0.173)
Socio-economic controls	No	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,127	3,127	3,127
Estimation method	c. logit	c. logit	c.logit

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in EU constituency c, and belonging to European political party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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.

[35]Interestingly, all EU constituencies have at least one MEP who switched position on trade agreements. The only exceptions are three constituencies in Poland (Podlaskie and Warmian-Masurian, Pomeranian, Subcarpathian).

Kwak *et al* (2021) argue that the conditional logit estimator is not robust in setups where the conditional serial independence assumption is violated. To test the robustness of our results, we re-estimate the specification with MEP fixed effects using a linear probability model. The point estimates remain positive and highly significant, as shown in Table A-9 in the Appendix.

In our baseline specification, we control for 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 $Export\ Ratio_{c,t-1}$ is correlated with other unobserved, time-varying constituency characteristics that also shape MEPs' votes on trade agreements. To address this possibility, we instrument export ratios with the instrumental variable defined in equation (5).

The results reported in Table 3 confirm the responsiveness of MEPs to the trade policy interests of their 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 ratio leads to point estimates that are significantly larger in the specifications of columns 1 and 2. Once we control for the socio-economic controls (column 3), the difference is only significant at the 10%. If we further add the political controls and include constituency fixed effects (columns 4 and 5), the coefficients in Table 3 are not statistically different from those in Table 1.[36] These comparisons suggest that our baseline estimates do not suffer from an omitted variable bias.[37]

4.3 Additional robustness checks

We report in the Appendix the results of a series of additional robustness checks. In the main analysis, the trade policy interests of a constituency are defined using only tradable goods (i.e., agriculture, mining, and manufacturing) for which reliable trade data are available. Table A-13 shows that the results are robust to constructing the export ratio by considering additional service sectors that can be traded internationally.

We have also verified that our findings hold if we construct the trade ratio at the level of

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

[37] We obtain similar results if we compare the coefficients in Table A-11, in which we estimate equation (4) using a linear probability model, with the corresponding two-stage-least-squares estimates in Table A-12. Performing Wald tests reveals that the coefficients reported in columns 4 and 5 of these tables are not significantly different from each other.

Table 3

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.016***	0.016***	0.010***	0.008***	0.021***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.008)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit	IV logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749	0.748	0.749	0.747

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using an IV logit model and evaluated at sample means. In the first step, we regress *Export Ratio*$_{c,t}$ on *Export Ratio IV*$_{c(k(g)),a(t)}$, as defined in equation (5), and the remaining control variables specified in each column (the results can be found in Table A-10). In the second step, we use the residuals from the first stage as an additional control in equation 4. The dependent variable is the indicator variable *Vote*$_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in EU constituency c, and belonging to European political party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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.

each MEP's national party. The logic of this robustness check is that, given that European legislators in all member states are elected by some form of proportional rule (see Table A-3) and that national parties control the selection of candidates for seats in the European Parliament, the main "constituents" for each MEP should be the supporters of his or her national party. We, therefore, construct an alternative measure of trade policy interests that is a weighted average of regional export ratios, with the weights given by the share of votes obtained by a national party in every region.[38] Note that this measure of trade policy interests varies at the national party and constituency levels. Table A-14 shows that our baseline results are robust to using this alternative export ratio.

In Table A-15, we use citizens' stated trade opinions from Eurobarometer data to capture

[38] We construct this alternative export ratio as *Export Ratio*$_{p(k),t} \equiv \sum_r$ *Export Ratio*$_{r(k)t} \times \phi_{p(k),r,t}$, where $\phi_{p(k),r}$ is the share of votes obtained by national party p in region r in the European elections prior to t.

a constituency's trade policy interests. As mentioned in Section 2, this information is not available in all years in our sample. As a result, for each agreement, we use the share of respondents who expressed a positive view of free trade in the most recent available Eurobarometer survey. The variable *Pro-Trade Opinions*$_{r(k),t}$ will thus exhibit much less variation over time than *Export Ratio*$_{r(k),t}$. Notwithstanding this limitation, with the exception of the specification that includes constituency FE, the coefficient on *Pro-Trade Opinions*$_{r(k),t}$ is positive and statistically significant.

The last 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 (Table A-16) or positive votes (Table A-17).

4.4 Alternative Interpretations of our Findings

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 our findings.

4.4.1 Regional Favoritism

A large literature shows that politicians tend to favor the regions in which they are born (e.g., Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; Hodler and Raschky, 2014; Burgess *et al.*, 2015). One may thus be concerned that our results could not be driven by MEPs responding to the interests of EU constituency, but by the interests of their birth region. In what follows, we show that, even when excluding the region in which EU legislators were born, their voting behavior depends on the trade policy interests of the EU constituency they represent.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that MEPs may take into account "parochial" interests when voting on trade agreements. Claudio Morganti, for instance, is an MEP elected on the lists of the Lega Nord (part of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy political group in the EP) who represented the Central Italy 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."[39]

[39]Declaration taken from the minutes of the debate in the European Parliament on February 17, 2011.

To construct the export ratio of MEPs' region of birth, we define an indicator variable $Birth_{i,r(k)}$ equal to 1 if MEP i was born in NUTS-2 region r in country k, and 0 otherwise. As mentioned in Section 2, this variable can only be defined for 1,444 MEPs.[40] The export ratio of the region of birth of MEP i is computed as:

$$Export\ Ratio\ Birth_{i,t} = \sum_{r} Birth_{i,r} \times Export\ Ratio_{r(k),t},$$

where $Export\ Ratio_{r(k),t}$ is defined in equation (2).

We can then construct the variable $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$, which captures the trade policy interests of MEP i's EU constituency, *excluding* his/her region of birth.[41]

In Table 4 we examine whether MEPs' trade votes reflect the interests of their EU constituency, when this excludes their region of birth. Columns 1 and 3 reproduce the specifications of columns 4 and 5 of Table 1, replacing the variable $Export\ Ratio_{ck,t}$ with $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$. The coefficient of this variable is positive and significant at the 1% level, indicating that our baseline findings are not driven by the interests of MEPs' region of birth. Columns 2 and 4 show that MEPs' voting behavior is also aligned with the trade policy interests of their birth region. Notice that we cannot include the variables $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$ and $Export\ Ratio\ Birth_{i,t}$ in the same specifications, since they are highly correlated.[42] This is not surprising, since 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 almost 65% of the cases.[43] 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).

[40] 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. Lastly, we drop from the sample MEPs born in a different country than the one they represent in the EP.

[41] $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$ is constructed excluding the region r for which $Birth_{i,r} = 1$ from the formula in (3).

[42] The correlation between these variables is 0.69 and significant at the 1% level. A regression of $Export\ Ratio\ Birth_{i,t}$ on $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$ and the set of FEs from column 4 of Table 4 yields a coefficient of 0.93 significant at the 1% level. The coefficient increases to 0.95, and is still significant at 1% level, when including the controls used in column 4 of Table 4.

[43] This percentage does not account for MEPs born in the Brussels region (which is split between two EU constituencies) and in Ireland (for which there is no perfect overlap between NUTS2 regions and EU constituencies).

Table 4

MEP's votes and trade interests of their constituency
(MEPs born in the EU, excluding region of birth)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Export Ratio$_{i,t-1}$	0.007***		0.020***	
	(0.002)		(0.006)	
Export Ratio Birth$_{i,t-1}$		0.003***		0.002*
		(0.001)		(0.001)
Legislator controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	7.727	7.727	7.650	7.650
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.738	0.746	0.738	0.744

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in EU constituency c, and belonging to European political party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{i,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest MEP i's EU constituency, excluding his/her region of birth. The variable *Export Ratio Birth*$_{i,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest of i's region of birth. 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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.

We have also traced MEPs' political connections to some regions. In particular, some EU legislators ran to represent a region in their national parliament. Esteban González Pons, for instance, is an MEP elected on the lists of the People's Party (part of the European People's Party political group in the EP), who has been representing Spain in the EP since 2014. Before that, he represented Valencia in the Spanish Senate. After voting against the trade agreement with South Africa, he declared: "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 put the interests of the people of Valencia before those of our parties."[44] We have constructed the indicator variable *Candidate*$_{i,r(k)}$ equal to 1 if MEP i ran to represent region r in country k's national

[44]From an interview with the *Valencia Plaza* on May 16, 2019.

parliament, and 0 otherwise.[45] The following variable then captures the trade policy interests of the region in which MEP i was a candidate:

$$Export\ Ratio\ Candidate_{i,t} = \sum_{r} Candidate_{i,r} \times Export\ Ratio_{r(k),t}.$$

We can then construct the variable $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$, which captures the trade policy interests of MEP i's EU constituency, *excluding* his/her region of candidacy.[46]

In Table A-18 in the Appendix, we examine whether MEPs' trade votes reflect the interests of their EU constituency, when this excludes their region of candidacy. The coefficient of $Export\ Ratio_{i,t-1}$ and $Export\ Ratio\ Candidate_{i,t}$ are both positive and significant when exploiting variation across constituencies (columns 1 and 2). They become insignificant when including constituency fixed effects (columns 3 and 4). This is not surprising: in this much smaller sample of MEPs, there is too little within-constituency variation in these variables.

4.4.2 Lobbying by Large Firms

Another possible concern is that our results could be driven by pressure from lobby groups. In particular, several studies that exploit rich lobbying data for the United States shows that large firms dominate lobbying on trade policy (e.g., Kim 2018; Osgood, 2017, Blanga-Gubbay *et al.*, 2023).

While there is no systematic data on lobbying within the EU, we can check whether our results are robust to controlling for the number of large firms in MEPs' constituencies. Table 5 shows that our baseline results are unaffected when we account for the presence of large firms.

[45] In this exercise, in addition to single NUTS-2 countries and Slovenia, we discard the Netherlands and Slovakia. MPs in these two countries are elected in a single national constituency. In our baseline analysis, we also exclude MEPs who ran to represent multiple regions. The results is unaffected if we include these MEPs and construct a measure of the export ratio of the regions in which they were candidates by aggregating employment values from the different regions-sectors.

[46] $Export\ Ratio_{i,t}$ is constructed excluding the region r for which $Candidate_{i,r} = 1$ from the formula in (3).

Table 5

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Employment > 250		Employment > 50	
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.010***	0.021***	0.008***	0.021***
	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.006)
Large Firms$_{k,t-1}$	-0.011**	0.099**	-0.007	0.169***
	(0.005)	(0.050)	(0.005)	(0.061)
MEP controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,177	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.747	0.749	0.747

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio from logit regressions, evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in EU constituency c, and belonging to European political party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c 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 (columns 1-2) or above 50 employees (columns 3-4) at the country-level, k, in year $t-1$. 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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.

5 Conclusions

Much of what the EU does requires the approval of the European Parliament, whose members are directly elected by European voters. MEPs are often accused of being disconnected from European voters. This Eurosceptic argument is widespread in the media and in scholarly debates and has played an important role in the Brexit campaign. It is also an integral part of the populist rhetoric.

Surprisingly, however, there is little evidence of whether European legislators respond to the interests of their electorate in their policy choices. In this paper, we investigate this

question by studying the determinants of MEPs' votes on the approval of trade agreements, a key policy of the EU. To this aim, we construct a new dataset of roll-call votes on the approval of 15 trade agreements negotiated by the EU since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

Our main finding is that European legislators do actually respond to their constituents' interests: MEPs representing constituencies with a higher share of jobs in export-oriented versus import-competing industries are more likely to vote in favor of these agreements. The results hold when controlling for a rich set of covariates and different types of fixed effects. Our baseline results are also unaffected if we instrument the trade policy interests of European constituencies using sectoral employment data from other non-EU OECD countries.

In terms of magnitude, our baseline estimates imply that a one standard deviation increase in the export ratio raises the probability of a vote in favor of a trade agreement by almost 4 percentage points. We also use these estimates to carry out counterfactual exercises and predict how many MEPs would change their vote on each trade agreement following a negative shock to the trade policy interests of their constituents.

We also find evidence that MEPs respond to more "parochial" trade policy interests. In particular, whether they vote in favor of trade agreements depends on the trade policy interests of the region in which they were born. MEPs' links to regions through their domestic political career also seem to matter: when restricting the analysis to the subset of MEPs who ran to represent a region in national parliaments, we find a positive association between the export ratio and the probability of voting in favor of an FTA.

An interesting avenue for future research is to exploit the fact that many agreements in our sample (all but those with Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam) were negotiated as mixed trade agreements. Under Article 5.2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the EU can act internationally and negotiate international agreements under three different types of competencies: exclusive competencies, competencies to "support, coordinate or supplement" the actions of the member states, and shared competencies. Agreements negotiated by the EU that include provisions outside its exclusive competencies should be concluded as "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 26 Member States in their national parliaments, involving 36 chambers, as well as regional parliaments in the case of Belgium (see Conconi *et al.*, 2021). Collecting data on these votes would allow studying the responsiveness of national legislators to their constituencies' interests.

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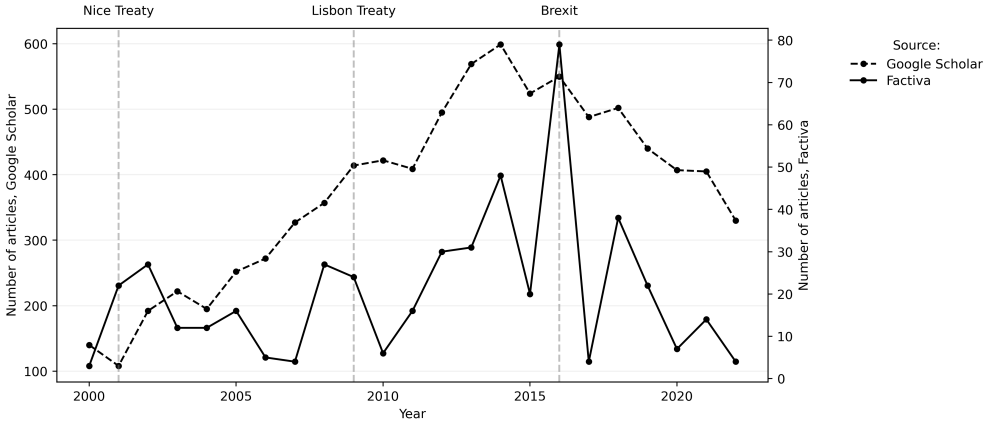
Appendices

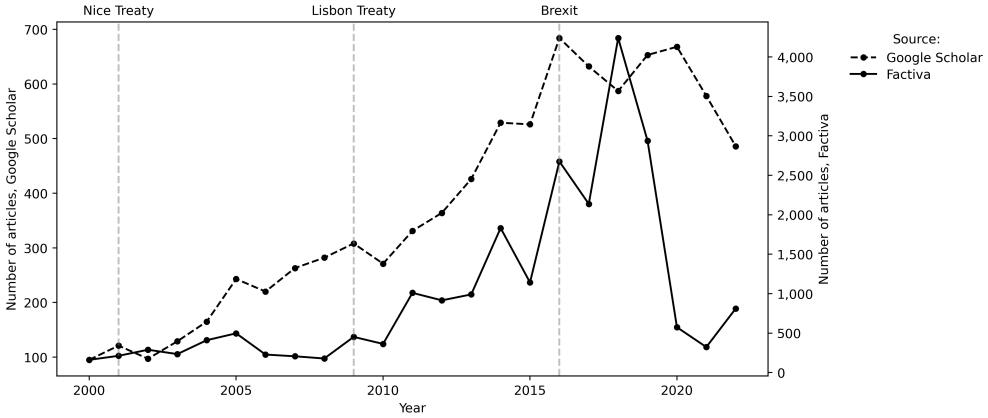
A-1 Figures

Figure A-1
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-2
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".

A-2 Tables

Table A-1
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.

Table A-2
MEPs' "parochial" attachment

Country	# MEPs	Birthplace available	Candidate national parliament	Elected national parliament	Elected regional parliament
Austria	43	42 (97.67%)	30 (69.77%)	13 (30.23%)	– –
Belgium	46	44 (95.65%)	31 (67.39%)	13 (28.26%)	23 (50.00%)
Bulgaria	41	38 (92.68%)	30 (73.17%)	22 (53.66%)	– –
Croatia	20	15 (75.00%)	10 (50.00%)	9 (45.00%)	– –
Cyprus	15	– –	– –	– –	– –
Czech Republic	48	46 (95.83%)	32 (66.67%)	19 (39.58%)	– –
Denmark	29	29 (100%)	20 (68.97%)	15 (51.72%)	– –
Estonia	16	– –	– –	– –	– –
Finland	33	33 (100%)	32 (96.97%)	27 (81.82%)	– –
France	173	155 (89.60%)	95 (54.91%)	27 (15.61%)	– –
Germany	184	176 (95.65%)	66 (35.87%)	19 (10.33%)	54 (29.35%)
Greece	56	48 (85.71%)	22 (39.29%)	14 (25.00%)	– –
Hungary	42	35 (83.33%)	33 (78.57%)	18 (42.86%)	– –
Ireland	26	24 (92.31%)	19 (73.08%)	15 (57.69%)	– –
Italy	173	168 (97.11%)	93 (53.76%)	49 (28.32%)	– –
Latvia	17	– –	– –	– –	– –
Lithuania	24	21 (87.50%)	21 (87.50%)	13 (54.17%)	– –
Luxembourg	13	– –	– –	– –	– –
Malta	13	– –	– –	– –	– –
Netherlands	56	52 (92.86%)	– –	– –	– –
Poland	114	111 (97.37%)	96 (84.21%)	85 (74.56%)	– –
Portugal	50	40 (80.00%)	27 (54.00%)	18 (36.00%)	– –
Romania	68	67 (98.53%)	44 (64.71%)	33 (48.53%)	– –
Slovakia	29	28 (96.55%)	– –	– –	– –
Slovenia	17	– –	– –	– –	– –
Spain	133	122 (91.73%)	65 (48.87%)	39 (29.32%)	61 (45.86%)
Sweden	50	44 (88.00%)	37 (74.00%)	24 (48.00%)	– –
United Kingdom	117	106 (90.60%)	68 (58.12%)	6 (5.13%)	10 (8.55%)
Total	1,646	1,444 (87.72%)	871 (52.91%)	478 (29.04%)	549 (33.35%)

Notes: We drop from the final sample MEPs who did not vote on any trade agreements during the period (2 MEPs), 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 (103 MEPs), MEPs born in regions for which we lack data on covariates (11 MEPs), MEPs born in the French Overseas constituencies (2 MEPs), and MEPs from countries that are not divided into several NUTS-2 regions, including Slovenia (86 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 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
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-4
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-5
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-3 Descriptive statistics

Table A-6
MEP-level variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
$Vote_{i,a(t)}$	9,284	0.76	0.43	0.00	1.00
$Female_i$	1,646	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
$Age_{i,t}$	9,851	53.55	10.90	21.97	92.31
$Tenure_{i,t}$	9,851	6.09	5.57	0.00	38.70

Table A-7
EU constituency-level variables

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Export Ratio$_{c,t}$	549	0.95	1.05	0.01	7.82
Export Ratio$_{c,t}$ (with services)	549	1.39	0.99	0.22	5.56
Pro-Trade Opinions$_{c,t}$	549	81.60	8.84	51.60	100.00
Tertiary Education$_c$	66	24.96	7.76	11.70	41.60
Unemployed$_c$	66	6.65	1.99	3.40	13.30
Urban$_c$	66	68.45	21.90	10.40	99.90
Left-Right Index$_c$	66	5.44	0.51	4.39	6.51
Trust in Political Parties$_c$	66	17.82	11.17	2.50	54.00
Trust in EU$_c$	66	56.40	15.56	20.30	78.60

A-4 Additional results and robustness checks

Table A-8

US legislators' trade votes and trade interests of their constituency

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t}$	0.022	0.023	0.008	0.046**	0.061**
	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.028)
Legislators controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	No	No	No	Yes	No
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	7,664	7,664	7,661	7,661	6,744
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.687	0.687	0.687	0.687	0.645

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if US legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of the legislator's (state or congressional district). The legislator controls include gender, age, and tenure of the member of congress. The constituency controls in the data of Conconi *et al.* (2014) include the following variables (contemporaneous to the vote): size of the constituency in terms of population; share of high skilled population (education level at a bachelor degree or above); and measures for the concentration of employment in export and import-competing industries. In column 5, the constituency fixed effects are defined at the state level (for US senators) and at the congressional district level (for US House Representatives). 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.

Table A-9

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.023***	0.033***	0.047***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Socio-economic controls	No	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEP FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	8,867	8,867	8,867
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS
R-squared	0.717	0.722	0.725

Notes: This table reports the coefficients of the export ratio estimated using a linear probability modedel. The dependent variable is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if an MEP voted in favor of a free trade agreement and 0 if (s)he voted against it. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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

First stage IV

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$^{IV}_{c,t-1}$	2.095***	2.097***	2.276***	2.319***	1.600***
	(0.070)	(0.069)	(0.056)	(0.051)	(0.026)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS

Notes: This table reports the first step of the IV logit specification. The dependent variable is *Export Ratio IV*$_{c(k(g)),t}$, as defined in equation (5). 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.006***	0.005***	0.007***	0.008***	0.028***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.008)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284
Estimation method	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
R-squared	0.602	0.602	0.612	0.618	0.631

Notes: This table reports the coefficients on the export ratio estimated using a linear probability model. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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 (2SLS)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.013***	0.012***	0.009***	0.009***	0.023***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.009)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284
Estimation method	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS	2SLS
KP F-statistic	883.8	918.7	1653.9	2044.2	3671.9

Notes: This table reports the coefficients on the export ratio estimated using a two-stage-least-squares model. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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

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

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.020***	0.020***	0.021***	0.017***	0.023***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.008)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749	0.748	0.749	0.747

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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 national party

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.004***	0.003***	0.004***	0.004***	0.008***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749	0.748	0.749	0.746

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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 opinions of their constituency

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Pro-Trade Opinions$_{c,t-1}$	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,284	9,177
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.749	0.749	0.749	0.750	0.747

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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 (abstentions as negative votes)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.012***	0.012***	0.012***	0.013***	0.036***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.012)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,851	9,851	9,851	9,851	9,812
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.719	0.719	0.719	0.719	0.718

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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 interests of their constituency (abstentions as positive votes)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Export Ratio$_{c,t-1}$	0.005***	0.005***	0.005***	0.006***	0.018***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.006)
Legislator controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	9,851	9,851	9,851	9,851	9,742
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.774

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means.The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if legislator i (elected constituency c, and belonging to party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{c,t-1}$ defined in equation (3) captures the trade policy interest of constituency c the year before the vote. The socioeconomic controls include the share of people with tertiary education, the unemployment rate, and the urbanization rate, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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 constituency
(MEPs who ran in national elections, excluding their region of candidacy)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Export Ratio$_{i,t-1}$	0.009**		-0.001	
	(0.003)		(0.010)	
Export Ratio Candidate$_{i,t-1}$		0.002**		0.000
		(0.001)		(0.002)
Legislator controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agreement FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
European Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	3.552	3.552	3.468	3.468
Estimation method	logit	logit	logit	logit
Pred. probability	0.738	0.754	0.737	0.750

Notes: This table reports the marginal effects of the export ratio estimated using a logit model and evaluated at sample means. The dependent variable is the indicator variable $Vote_{i(c,p),a(t)}$, which is equal to 1 if MEP i (elected in EU constituency c, and belonging to European political party p), votes in favor of agreement a in year t, and 0 if (s)he votes against it. The sample is restricted to MEPs who ran in national elections. The variable *Export Ratio*$_{i,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest of MEP i's EU constituency, excluding the region which he/she ran to represent in national elections. The variable *Export Ratio Candidate*$_{i,t-1}$ captures the trade policy interest of the region that MEP i's ran to represent. 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, measured in 2008 and interacted with year-specific fixed effects. The political controls include the ideological positioning of the constituents and trust levels in political parties and the EU, all measured in 2008 and 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.