A Politically Independent Executive Arm? EU Commissioners' Ideological Alignment and Budget Allocation in the European Union*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of the political distance between European Commissioners and heads of government on the allocation of funds flowing from the European Union to EU member states. The EU's agricultural and regional budgets offer two particularly interesting case studies due to the discretion exerted in these domains by the Commissioner for Agriculture and the Commissioner for Regional Policy, respectively. Leveraging the difference in timing in the turnovers of Commissioners and heads of government, I test whether the political distance between EU commissioners and heads of administrations affects the share of agricultural and regional funds countries receive from 1979 to 2006. Results show that greater ideological distance is a strongly significant deterrent of funds being channelled. The effects are strongest in pre-election years, for countries providing the Commissioners in charge of the given portfolios, and for countries that are single-party ruled, as opposed to coalition ruled. These findings suggest the behavior of European Commissioners follows similar principles to nationally elected leaders and are important given the salience of agriculture and regional funding at the European level and ongoing debates surrounding EU integration and the political independence of the EU's executive body.

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1 Introduction

The European Commission (EC) is often at the heart of debates between those advocating for more or less European integration. The EC is the executive body of the European Union (EU) with features of both an international organization and those of a national ministry with strong executive powers. Supporters of deeper EU integration typically want to give the EC more powers while those in favor of less - or even exiting from the EU - often complain that it lacks political accountability. Most of this debate, however, is framed in terms of principles and ideals but ignores the degree to which the EC has actually been acting as a political player. While European Commissioners are accountable to the European Parliament and, in principle, act as politically independent actors, information on the way decisions are taken is scarce. The procedures underlying negotiations between Commissioners, heads of government, and other EU institutions remain opaque.

Focussing on agriculture and regional funds due to their high salience and the identifiable discretion exerted by the respective Commissioners responsible in these areas, I investigate the impact of ideological distance between EU Commissioners and receiving countries' administrations on the allocation of funds flowing from the EU to member states.

As highlighted in Gehring and Schneider (2018) (hereafter GS, 2018), the link between ideological factors, nationality, the distribution of the EU's budget, and the workings of its executive body have been under-investigated. Following GS (2018)'s study on the impact of the EU agricultural Commissioners' nationality, this paper is, to the best of the author's knowledge, the first to quantitatively measure the effects of political distance between Commissioners and national administrations on the allocation of transfers flowing from the EU to member states. GS (2018) find a significant, positive, and large impact of providing the agriculture Commissioner on the share of agriculture funding a country receives. On average, they find that being represented by the Commissioner for Agriculture leads to a rise by 0.79 percentage points in a given country's agricultural receipts as a share of the total EU agricultural budget. According to their estimates, this represents approximately half a billion euros per year for a fictive average sized country as of the 2006 budget. This paper goes one step further by focussing on the role of ideological proximity, another important dimension, and thus, further sheds light on the EU's executive body's relative independence and political behavior.

To bridge this gap in the literature, I first use the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow, 2012) to construct for each EU country-budget-year observation a measure of the absolute ideological distance between each country's head of government and the sitting Commissioner for Agriculture and the sitting Commissioner for Regional Policy. In a second step, I match this information with data on the share of the specific budget flowing to each country and other observables provided

by GS (2018). I then regress these shares, for which I have data from 1979 to 2006, on the ideological distance variable and the controls commonly used in the literature in a two-way fixed-effects setting.

The main concern for a causal interpretation of the results lies in the potential endogeneity of the EU Commissioners' relative ideologies. The major differences in the electoral calendars between EU and national elections, frequent changes in national administrations following votes of no confidence, resignations and elections, and the nomination procedure of both Commissioners of interest, however, greatly contribute to mitigating these concerns. I further help alleviate these concerns by adding country-budget specific linear time trends in my main specification and by showing that results are consistent with a number of robustness and placebo tests.

My estimates show that a one unit increase in the absolute ideological distance leads to a 0.35 percentage point decline in the share of funds received. This implies that a one standard deviation increase in the measure of absolute ideological distance leads to a 0.41 percentage point reduction in the share of funds received. Results are of similar magnitude for both regional policy (-0.35 percentage points) and agriculture (-0.33 percentage points). These changes would translate into reductions of approximately EUR 140 million per year of regional funding and EUR 180 million per year of agriculture funds for a fictive average beneficiary country as of the 2006 budget following a one standard deviation increase absolute political distance between the Commissioner in charge and a given head of government. Overall these can represent substantive differences, especially for smaller economies where such funds often represent large amounts.

Theoretically, these results could reflect two channels. On one hand, Commissioners could be channelling funds to politically aligned member states simply because they believe these funds would be put at better use in countries that pursue a reform agenda they believe in. On the other hand, they could reflect the desire to help political allies stay in power to advance Commissioners' future careers. An investigation of the mechanisms highlights the importance of the second channel suggesting the importance of a mutually beneficial exchange between politically aligned Commissioners and heads of government and is in line with the pork barrel politics theory (Ferejohn, 1974; Weingast et al., 1981; Shepsle and Weingast, 1981): Commissioners disproportionately respond to politically aligned national leaders' demands for more funds in exchange for future favors. The effects are driven by single-party governed countries (-0.39 percentage points) and are absent in coalition-ruled countries where the Commissioner has less clarity on the identity of the transfers' main beneficiary. Furthermore, results are strongest in pre-election years (-0.39 percentage points), when incumbents need the transfers the most, but are still strong in other years (-0.34 percentage points). Finally, political distance matters more for countries providing the Commissioner (-0.48 percentage points) while remaining an important factor in other member states (-0.33 percentage points).

Taken together, these results highlight the importance of Commissioners' ideological alignment with national leaders and complement the results by GS (2018). Providing the Commissioner matters positively for the allocation of the EU budget insofar as the Commissioner is of the same political allegiance as a country's leader. The Commissioner's expected benefit of transferring a disproportionate share of funds to politically aligned incumbents is even higher for the Commissioner's home-country's political allies, as one could expect home partisan support to be the most important factor in determining the Commissioners' future career prospects, both at home or abroad. Beyond nationality, the potential interests of Commissioners in further pursuing an international career also means they seek the support of foreign political allies who also play an important role in shaping their future fortunes.

1.1 Contribution to the Literature

The contribution to the literature of this paper is threefold. It first builds on a large body of work exploring the effects of ideological proximity for the transfer of resources from upper tiers of government administration to lower tiers of government with a large focus on the US Congress or President (see e.g., Alt and Lowry, 1994; Albouy, 2013; Berry et al., 2010; Bickers and Stein, 1996; Clemens and Veuger, 2021; Larcinese et al., 2006; Levitt and Snyder Jr, 1995) but also other western democracies (see e.g., Bracco et al., 2015; Brollo and Nannicini, 2012; DenPoemark, 2000; Fouirnaies and Mutlu-Eren, 2015; Hanretty, 2021; Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2008). The findings in this paper are consistent with these earlier findings and show that the dynamics found at the national level are at also at play in the less integrated, transnational model of the EU.

Secondly, this paper relates to the literature on the allocation of funds in international organizations (see e.g., Dreher et al., 2009; Kuziemko and Werker, 2006) which demonstrates the benefits for countries to hold key positions. More specifically, it contributes to the literature studying EU institutions (see e.g., Aksoy, 2010; Carnegie and Marinov, 2017; Kauppi and Widgrén, 2004; Mazumder et al., 2013; Rodden, 2002; Schneider, 2013).[1] As argued in GS (2018), this literature has mostly focused on EU politics and the EU's legislative body while the workings of its executive body have been under-investigated with the exception of a few qualitative studies (see e.g., Smith, 2003; Wonka, 2007) and the quantitative study by GS (2018). Importantly for this study, none of these studies focus on the impact of partisan alignment between member states' leaders and individuals in charge of EU institutions.

Thirdly, this paper contributes to the literature exploring the effects of national, regional, or ethnic proximity on the allocation of transfers flowing from upper to lower tiers of government (see e.g., Dreher et al., 2016; Franck and Rainer, 2012; GS, 2018; Hodler and Raschky, 2014). In

[1] See Alesina et al. (2005) and Baldwin and Wyplosz (2019) for wider reviews of this literature (GS, 2018).

the context of the EC, the results of this study complement the findings by GS (2018) by showing that this dimension is likely to have a different impact depending on partisan alignment between the leader in charge at the upper tier and her home country or region's local leadership.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, I introduce the institutional setting at hand. Section 3 describes the data and empirical strategy. Section 4 presents the main results. Section 5 discusses the mechanisms underpinning the results while Section 6 concludes.

2 Institutional Setting

The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union. Its responsibilities include the proposing of legislation, the enforcing of EU laws, and the directing of the EU's administrative operations. The EC is currently composed of 27 Commissioners who oversee an administration of more than 30,000 public servants. The Commission works in a cabinet structure where Commissioners have responsibilities similar to national ministers (GS, 2018). Apart from the President of the Commission who oversees and coordinates the work of the entire EC, each Commissioner is typically responsible over a particular portfolio such as Economic and Financial affairs, Competition, Regional Policy, Trade, Justice, or Agriculture. These portfolios are usually related to a specific "Directorate-General" EU civil servants work for. The composition of the EC typically changes after elections to the European Parliament to whom Commissioners are accountable to.[2] These elections take place simultaneously in each member state every five years and directly elect by universal suffrage the more than 700 Members of the European Parliament. Importantly for my research design, European elections, in their overwhelming majority, do not coincide with national elections. One of the first tasks of the newly elected European legislature is the vetting process of each Commissioner and the election in a single vote of the full Commission. This takes place after the nomination by each country of one Commissioner.[3] While heads of government and Commissioner candidates often seek to lobby the nominated President of the EC a specific portfolio, it is the EC President who ultimately allocates the portfolios among each candidate (GS, 2018). As highlighted in Nugent (2001) and GS (2018), the specific choices remain unclear until the announcement is made such that it is nearly impossible to predict which country out of all members is assigned one particular position *ex-ante*. Therefore, the final allocation of

[2]Together with the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament constitutes the legislative body of the EU. Its powers and responsibilities include the adoption and amendment of EU legislative proposals, the voting on the EU's budget, and the supervision of the work of Commissioners. The Council of the European Union, often referred to as the Council of Ministers is the only specifically intergovernmental body of the EU's legislative arm. It meets in different configurations of all member states' national ministers (one per state). These ministers vary according to the topic under consideration.

[3]Until the 2004 enlargement, France, Germany, Italy, and the UK were entitled to two Commissioners per cabinet.

Commissioners often results in surprises and can be considered to being close to being as good as random (GS, 2018).[4]

Once in office, Commissioners act as agenda-setters who take legislative and budgetary initiatives and make proposals to other bodies of the EU's governing system. However, information on the way decisions are taken and on the negotiation procedures between Commissioners, national leaders, and other EU institutions remains limited. Although Commissioners swear an oath pledging to respect the EU's treaties and to act as politically independent actors when carrying out their duties during their mandate, the nomination structure of Commissioners is such that national administrations appoint politicians who can be expected to pursue both national and partisan interests once in power (see e.g., Vaubel, 2006; GS, 2018; and https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/european-commission_en). This may potentially give rise to principal-agent problems. National governments increasingly appoint Commissioners who previously worked as high-ranking politicians in their countries of origin (e.g., many former ministers) and more generally active political members of each sending country's ruling party (see e.g., Döring, 2007; Egeberg, 2010). While the nomination of Commissioners should partially reflect the results of EU elections (see the Treaty on European Union, article 17(7)), Wonka (2007) shows that over 65 percent of Commissioners are sent by parties in government and less than 20 percent from opposition parties (GS, 2018). This potentially provides a textbook case study of pork barrel politics whereby Commissioners are faced by national leaders' demands for more bacon in order to be reelected. Commissioners strategically respond to these demands by allocating more resources to copartisans at national levels of government whose support Commissioners need the most to advance their future fortunes both at home and abroad. It is indeed likely that Commissioners are interested in positions which require the support of domestic and foreign political allies once their mandate at the EC is over, thereby preventing them from acting as politically independent actors.

As highlighted by GS (2018), the **Commissioner for Agriculture** offers a great case study to investigate the potential for Commissioners to act as political agents. Up until recently, one of the main responsibilities of this Commissioner was the allocation to different member countries of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). Before its replacement by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the EAGGF was the main pillar of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), representing the largest share of the EU's overall transfers. As highlighted in Figure 1, the fund accounted for as much as 70 percent of the total EU budget in the early 1980s and ac-

[4]For more information, see: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/faq/8/how-are-the-commission-president-and-commissioners-appointed and Napel and Widgrén (2008)

counted for approximately 45 percent of the total budget in 2006.[5] Its mission included providing direct payments to farmers under the CAP and the financing of measures to regulate agricultural markets such as export refunds and regulation interventions. Up until 2006, CAP budget negotiations began a year ahead of the budget year with the Commissioner for Agriculture making a proposal to the Agricultural Council, a council made up of Ministers for Agriculture in each member state (Fouilleux, 2010). This Council meets monthly with each of these meetings offering possibilities for the Commissioner to influence the share of transfers countries receive due to the Commissioner's agenda-setting power and information advantages (Fouilleux, 2010; GS, 2018).[6]

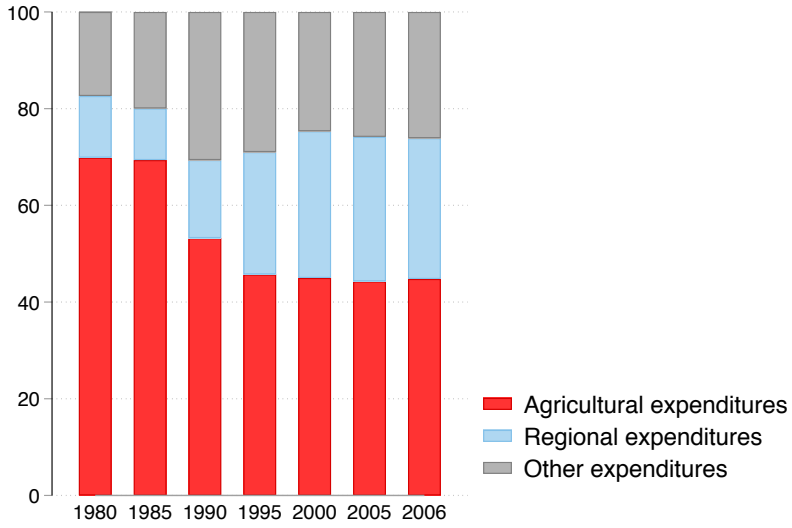
The Commissioner for Regional Policy also has agenda-setting powers in her realm and oversees the allocation of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). As shown in Figure 1, the importance of these funds rose drastically over the sample period offsetting the reduction in agriculture spending. In 2006, they accounted for approximately 30 percent of the overall EU's transferred funds, representing the second largest share of the EU's budget. The goal of these funds is mainly to promote the development and structural adjustment of EU regions lagging behind, generally assist the social and economic transformation of regions faced with structural problems, and more broadly to promote employment (Butzen et al., 2006). Regional funds' rising importance can be explained by the consecutive accession to the EU of several poorer countries over the sample period and the EU's concern for maintaining social and economic cohesion within the EU (Butzen et al., 2006). In contrast to the Commissioner for Agriculture, GS (2018) do not find any effects of the nationality of the Commissioner for Regional Policy on the allocation of regional funds to member states. The authors argue that this is because the allocation of regional funds are to a much greater extent based on formal criteria giving Commissioners in this field much less room to maneuver. For instance, one of the criteria for European regions to be eligible for ESF/ERDF funding is that their per capita GDP lie below 75 percent of average per capita GDP in the EU (see e.g. Becker et al. 2012; Borin et al. 2021). An alternative hypothesis could be that the regional Commissioner over the sample period mostly came from the EU's four largest economies with fewer regions lagging behind, and thus less room for changes in regional policy affecting Commissioners' home countries.[7] This paper argues that the regional policy portfolio still offers an excellent case study for investigating the role of political distance in determining the allocation of funds flowing from the EU to member states. Similarly to agriculture, the regional budget's allocation can still be directly traced to a single Commissioner who sets the

[5] see Butzen et al. (2006) for a detailed breakdown and explanations of trends in the EU budget over my sample period: http://www.nationalebankvanbelgie.be/doc/ts/publications/economicreview/2006/ecorevii2006_h4.pdf

[6] It has been noted that, up until 2007 and the Lisbon-Treaty, the European Parliament had a low influence on CAP-related budgetary decisions (see, e.g., Crombez and Swinnen, 2011; GS, 2018; Schneider, 2013).

[7] See Appendix Tables A1 and A2 for a list of the Commissioners in charge of Agriculture and Regional Policy, respectively.

Figure 1: Structure of EU expenditures, as percentages of the total budget (%)



agenda and can potentially make regional funds deviate from their trend. The overall size of both funds remains subject to the EU's long-term multi-annual financial framework and decisions by the Commissioner for Budget but discretion within the predefined available budget remains.[8] The annual meetings between the Commissioner and other bodies of the EU should in theory still give important room for regional Commissioners to maneuver and politically reallocate funds between affected countries each year.

To summarize, agriculture and regional policy offer excellent options for studying the extent to which EU Commissioners seek to help politically aligned incumbents stay in power. Both Commissioners in charge of these respective portfolios can be identified as solely responsible over specific, salient, and large budgetary items with a clear redistributive nature and consistent yearly observable flows to individual EU member states.

3 Data and Empirical strategy

3.1 Data

The data used in this project were obtained from the replication files in GS (2018) and the ParlGov data set (Döring and Manow, 2012).

[8]The multi-annual financial frameworks is a seven-year financial constraint negotiated by member states' heads of government where countries "outline EU spending by setting ceilings on expenditures for each budget category and on total expenditure" (Schneider 2013, 465)

Specifically, I use ParlGov, a data infrastructure containing information on party positions measured on an economic and cultural left-right [0-10] scale, to retrieve data on heads of government and Commissioners' ideological positioning. These positions are comparable over countries and are time-invariant unweighted mean values of information from the Castles and Mair (1984), Huber and Inglehart (1995), Benoit and Laver (2006), and Bakker et al. (2015) party expert surveys. First, I retrieve the list of heads of government from 1979 to 2006 for all EU member states. Appendix Table A3 provides for each country in my sample the positions I identify as heads of government. Second, I do a similar exercise for all appointed Commissioners for Agriculture and Regional Policy over the same period. Finally, I assign to each head of government and Commissioner their respective ideological positioning identified by the ParlGov data set at the time of their nomination. Appendix Tables A1 and A2 respectively show the appointment and resignation dates of all agriculture and regional Commissioners in the sample as well as their countries of origin and ParlGov left-right (LR) position at the time of their appointment. For years when a new Commissioner or new head of government is nominated, I compute a weighted average of the LR score based on the number of the month the new Commissioner or leader enters office. A month is counted if the person of interest was in office for the major part of the month.

The data set in the replication files of GS (2018) provides all the remaining data used in this analysis. It contains country-year observations on agricultural funds receipts of a country as a share of the overall EU agricultural budget (*AFS*) and the share of regional structural payments member states receive as a share of the total ESF and ERDF budget (*RSF*) from 1979 to 2006.[9] It also provides information on the proportion of the year (measured as the proportion of months within a year) in which a country appointed the Commissioner, the main independent variable in GS (2018). It also contains the other variables used in the vector of controls of the main regression. The inclusion of such variables is commonly used in the literature on the EU (Bouvet and Dall'Erba, 2010; GS, 2018; Schneider, 2013), is important to condition for potential selection problems in my estimation, and may increase the precision of the estimates of interest. For reasons of transparency and to allow for the comparison of my results, I include the exact same controls as in GS (2018). These controls relate to the size, economic conditions, importance of agriculture, and the political situation of member states (elections, EU support, and whether the country recently joined the EU). The vector of controls also includes dummies for whether a country holds the European Commission Presidency and whether it holds the EU Council Presidency.

[9] As explained in GS (2018), the transfers stemming from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), one of the two follow-up funds that replaced the EAGGF, are hard to directly trace back to the actions of the Commissioner for Agriculture. By co-financing economic rural development programs, it is more likely to also depend on other Commissioners' decisions. This explains why the sample used in GS (2018) and this paper ends in 2006.

Table 1: Summary statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Funds share	669	7.409	7.372	0.004	37.994
Commissioner for Agriculture or Regional Policy	669	0.077	0.264	0	1
Commissioner, ParlGov grade [0-10]	51	5.372	1.382	3.645	7.500
Head of government, ParlGov grade	669	5.501	1.390	2.628	8.496
Absolute Distance between Commissioner and head of government: *AbsDist*	669	1.587	1.177	0	4.418
EC President	669	0.073	0.256	0	1
Pre-election year	669	0.245	0.430	0	1
Election year	669	0.278	0.448	0	1
Employment agriculture (ln)	669	5.635	1.561	0.993	8.010
Gross value added, agriculture	669	3.878	2.887	0.380	14.351
Unemployment rate (%)	669	8.335	3.678	0.700	21.300
Per capita GDP (EU=100)	669	100.260	38.892	23.050	301.183
New Member State	669	0.203	0.403	0	1
Voting Power Council	669	7.441	4.577	0.900	17.857
Domestic EU support	669	46.478	23.021	-30.000	86.000
Council Presidency	669	0.151	0.358	0	1
Coalition government	669	0.256	0.437	0	1
Commissioner for Agriculture:					
ParlGov grade	26	5.992	1.016	3.801	7.292
Providing the Commissioner	364	0.073	0.258	0	1
AbsDist between Commissioner and head of government	364	1.436	1.167	0	4.418
Agricultural Funds Share (%)	364	7.028	6.716	0.004	27.465
Commissioner for Regional Policy:					
ParlGov grade	25	4.727	1.435	3.645	7.500
Providing the Commissioner	305	0.082	0.272	0	1
AbsDist between Commissioner and head of government	305	1.768	1.165	0	4.250
Regional Funds Share (%)	305	7.863	8.074	0.014	37.994

Notes: N refers to the number of observations, mean refers to the mean value of the outcome, SD the standard deviation, min the minimum, and max the maximum. Appendix Table A4 details the sources and definitions of each variable further. The sample size differ for the variables related to the Commissioners for Agriculture and Regional Policy since these Commissioners were not always politically affiliated throughout the sample period.

Moreover, it includes the Shapley-Shubik index, a measure of countries' bargaining power in the EU Council.[10] Finally, this data set also contains information on whether and when countries

[10]The EU Council is formed by member states' heads of the executive, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. In contrast to the Council of the European Union (the Council of ministers), it has no legislative power but sets the EU's overall political direction, priorities, and policy agenda. It works by traditionally adopting "conclusions" during European Council meetings which typically identify concerning

were ruled by a coalition government, a binary variable I use when investigating potential mechanisms driving the results. I provide a list of the main dependent, independent, and control variables, as well as their sources and definitions in Appendix Table A4.

Merging these two datasets, I obtain a final sample of 669 country-budget-year observations covering 25 countries and 28 years from 1979 to 2006. Note that the 1979 and 1980 agricultural transfers observations are excluded from the main sample. This is because the Commissioner for Agriculture during these years was not politically affiliated such that the ideological distance variable between the Commissioner for Agriculture and heads of government could not be computed. For the same reasons, regional transfers are excluded post-2004. Furthermore, I drop the five country-year observations for which the head of government was unaffiliated during most of a given year from the main sample.[11] I verify that dropping these observations is unproblematic by showing in Appendix Table B1 that the main results found in GS (2018) on their sample of 385 country-year observations are very close to those found when running their exact same estimation procedure on this papers's restricted sample. Table 1 provides summary statistics.

3.2 Empirical strategy

The empirical strategy of this study closely follows that of GS (2018). Specifically I estimate:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_t + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \quad (1)$$

$BS_{i,f,t}$ refers to budget f 's fund receipts of country i in year t as a share of the overall EU regional or agricultural budget f in year t. $X_{i,t}$ is the vector of controls while $Comm_{i,f,t}$ is the main independent variable used in GS (2018) and gives the proportion of the year in which a country appointed the Commissioner. $AbsDist_{i,f,t} = |NatLeadLR_{i,t} - ComLR_{ft}|$ is the continuous independent variable of interest measuring the absolute distance in LR ParlGov ideology between the Commissioner ($ComLR_{f,t}$) for Agriculture or Regional Policy and county i's head of the government in year t ($NatLeadLR_{i,t}$).[12] $\zeta_{i,f}$ and ρ_t represent country-budget and year fixed-effects, respectively. Including such fixed-effects allows me to account for unobservable year and country-budget spe-

issues and actions to tackle them. Its Presidency rotates between each member state every six months. Since the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon (article 15) the European Council also now appoints a full-time President from one of the member states.

[11] Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia only joined the EU post-2006. Therefore, these countries are no included in the sample. The UK voted to leave in 2016 and is thus in the sample throughout.

[12] The control variables are: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time t, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

cific level variation. The standard errors ($\varepsilon_{i,f,t}$) are two-way clustered at the country-budget and year level (Baum et al., 2015; Cameron et al., 2011; Schaffer, 2020). This level of clustering is important since the dependent variable is a share out of all EU countries leading to correlation between the receipts of each country at each point in time (GS, 2018). This strategy is therefore akin to a two-way fixed-effects estimation procedure with a staggered and non-stochastic treatment.

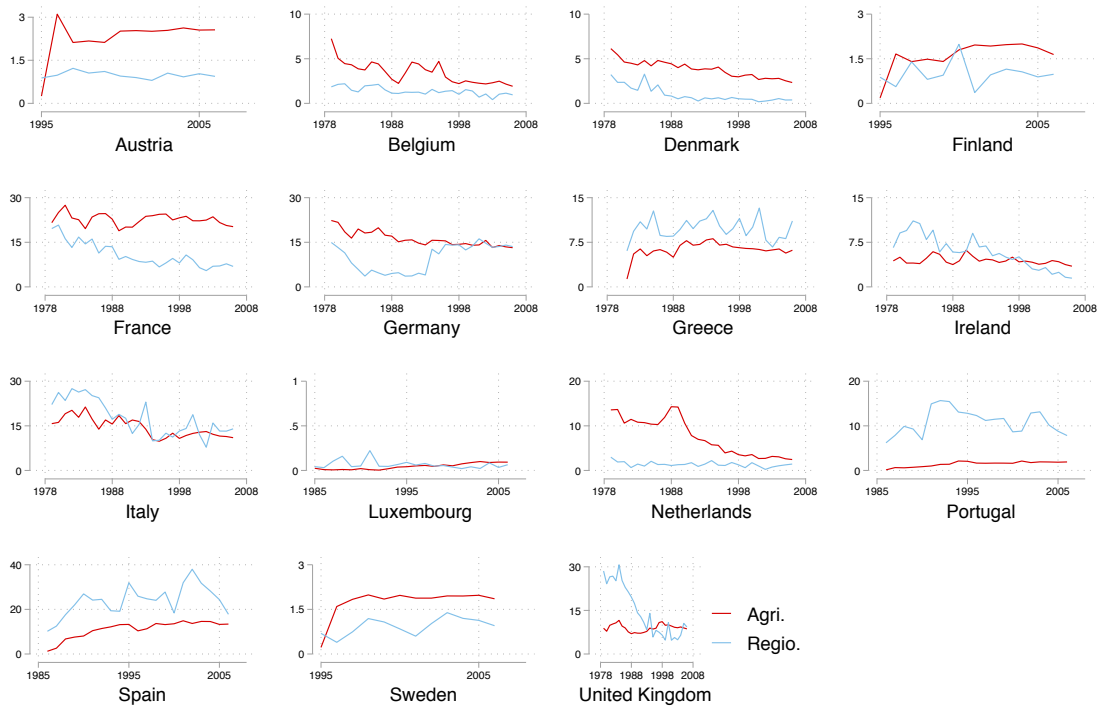
The main threat to causal identification of the procedure laid out above relates to the assumption of common trends between more and less treated countries before changes in ideology of the Commissioner or countries' administrations take place. This assumption being satisfied is plausible given the high frequency at which national leaders are replaced following elections, resignations, or votes of no confidence, the orthogonality between EU and national electoral calendars, and the specificities of the Agriculture and Regional Commissioners nomination procedures described in Section 2 often leading to surprises.

However, one might still be concerned that the budgets of countries where the ideology of heads of government and Commissioners are not aligned lie on different trends. For instance, a country experiencing sectoral changes as a result of relative improving economic conditions may see the share of agriculture in its GDP decline and, as as result, receive fewer agriculture funds. More importantly, economic improvements would also mechanically lead to a reduction in the share of regional funds transferred since an important pre-condition for regions being eligible to these funds requires their GDP per capita to be below 75 percent of the average per capita GDP in the EU. These developments might in turn lead to a positive or negative correlation between the political ideology of heads of government and Commissioners, as countries on different economic paths might vote differently to other countries as well as lobby for different posts within the Commission. Such trends can further be explained by successive enlargement rounds diluting the shares most countries receive over time and are clearly visible for certain countries and budgetary items in Figure 2.

In light of these concerns, I follow Fouirnaies and Mutlu-Eren (2015) and GS (2018) by adding country-budget specific linear time trends $\alpha_{i,f}t$ to the main specification. The inclusion of country-budget specific linear trends, in addition to the inclusion of control variables, helps alleviate the concerns mentioned above although non-linear country-budget specific trends could still bias the estimation. Therefore, I also show that results broadly do not change when adding squared trends in the estimation in Appendix Table C3.

I also address the recent literature showing that linear regressions with group and time fixed-effects are equivalent to estimating a weighted sum of the average treatment effects in each of these time periods and groups (De Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille, 2020). As a result, two-way fixed-effects coefficients may be of the opposite sign of the average treatment effect in each group and period in the presence of negative weights and heterogeneous across units treatment effects

Figure 2: Evolution over time of the share of funds allocated in EU pre-2004 enlargement countries



Notes: Agri. refers to the share of agriculture funds out of the total agriculture budget each member state receives. Regio. refers to the share of regional funds countries receive out of the share of the total regional budget.

(see also Borusyak and Jaravel, 2017; Callaway et al., 2021; De Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille, 2018; de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille, 2021; Sun and Abraham, 2021). I first follow the procedure suggested by De Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) by showing that these coefficients can only be of opposite signs under a relatively large amount of treatment effect heterogeneity. Furthermore, I follow the diagnostics proposed by Jakiela (2021) for assessing the likely severity of heterogeneous treatment effects. Namely, I show that results are robust to excluding one country at a time, one Commission Cabinet at a time, and when performing further heterogeneity analyses in described in Section 4.2 suggesting treatment heterogeneity is unlikely to be a problem. I also show that the observed results are robust across a large set of alternative specifications laid out in Section 4.2, including a specification accounting for country-year and country-budget fixed-effects.

4 Results

4.1 Main results

Table 2 reports the effects of providing the Commissioner exerting discretion over the budget of interest and, this paper's main variable of interest, the absolute ideological distance between the Commissioner in charge and member states' heads of government, *AbsDist*. Columns 1 to 3 show the results with the inclusion of country-budget and year fixed-effects only, columns 4 to 6 show results after adding controls, while columns 7 to 9 add country-budget specific linear time trends. Columns 1, 4, and 7 report the results of the regression of the *Fund Share* on providing the Commissioner only and does not account for *AbsDist*. This is akin to the main regression employed in GS (2018). Columns 2, 5, and 8 report the results of a regression including the effect of *AbsDist* only, while columns 3, 6, and 9 report the results when including both independent variables.

A first noteworthy observation is that the effects of ideological distance remain stable regardless of whether one also includes the variable for providing the Commissioner across all three specifications. In contrast, the point estimate for providing the Commissioner changes substantially depending on whether one includes the ideological distance variable in GS (2018)'s preferred specification with country-budget specific linear trends. The point estimate on providing the Commissioner indeed declines from 0.51 to 0.36 and is not significant at conventional levels (p-value=0.136).

Whereas the point estimate on providing the Commissioner declines as controls and trends are added, the magnitude of the effects of ideological distance is not sensitive to the inclusion of controls. However the point estimate on absolute ideological distance more than doubles when adopting GS (2018)'s preferred, and what the authors consider to be the most conservative, specification with linear trends. In this case, I find similar point estimates between providing the Commissioner

and a one unit increase in political distance. As shown in column 9, a one unit increase in the political distance between the Commissioner and the head of governments is associated to 0.35 percentage point reduction in the share of funds received. This equates to a one standard deviation increase in the absolute ideological distance being associated to a 0.41 percentage points reduction in the share received, representing 5.59 percent of a standard deviation. In this case, results are significant at the one percent level.

Table 2: Regression results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome	*Fund Share*								
AbsDist		-0.188	-0.180		-0.194*	-0.173*		-0.359***	-0.350***
		(0.229)	(0.202)		(0.071)	(0.060)		(0.002)	(0.001)
Commissioner	1.667		1.653	1.362*		1.313*	0.513		0.359
	(0.115)		(0.119)	(0.075)		(0.075)	(0.138)		(0.136)
Observations	669	669	669	669	669	669	669	669	669
Country-budget fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Country-budget lin. time trends	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Lin. refers to linear. The control variables used in the baseline are a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

Table 3 shows the results by specific budget by adding interactions between the political distance and providing the Commissioner independent variables with a binary variable, $Agri$, taking value one for the agricultural budget to the main specification:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \kappa AbsDist_{i,f,t} * Agri + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + \tau Comm_{i,f,t} * Agri + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_t + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \quad (2)$$

As in Table 2, columns 1 to 3 show the results with the inclusion of country-budget and year fixed-effects only. Columns 4 to 6 show results after adding controls, while columns 7 to 9 show results after adding country-budget specific linear time trends.

A first noteworthy observation is that the effects of political distance are stable for both budgets across specifications which do or do not account for providing the Commissioner.

Starting with the Commissioner for Regional policy, the effects are only present when accounting for linear country-budget specific trends in columns 8 and 9. One can infer from this result that this difference in the regional Commissioner's results is mostly what drives the change in coefficients on the effects of distance between column 5 (resp. 6) and 8 (resp. 9) in the pooled specification presented in Table 2. Accounting for these trends is warranted given the observed country-budget specific trends in Figure 2. As argued in Section 3, accounting for country-budget specific linear time trend alleviates endogeneity concerns stemming from the potential for countries experiencing economic improvements (resp. deterioration) to mechanically receive less (resp. more) regional funds. These developments might in turn be correlated with systematic differences in the political distance between heads of government and the Commissioner for Regional Policy which should be accounted for.

The results in column 9 suggest that a one unit increase in political distance between a country's head of government and the Commissioner for Regional Policy leads to a 0.35 percentage points reduction in the share of the regional budget countries receive and is significant at the five percent level. This equates to a one standard deviation increase in political distance between the Regional Commissioner and heads of government leading to a 0.41 percentage points reduction in the share of funds transferred. For an average sized fictive country such as the Netherlands (approximately 17 million inhabitants), this represents approximately an 11 percent reduction in regional funds' receipts and approximately EUR 140 million as of the 2006 regional budget.[13] In line with GS (2018), I find that providing the Commissioner for Regional policy does not affect the share of regional funds countries receive. While the point estimates are not particularly small, they are far from being significant at any conventional level in all specifications. The effects of providing the Commissioner for Regional Policy are stable across specifications that do or do not account for political distance such that the change in coefficients on the effects of providing the Commissioner depending on whether political distance is included or not in the pooled specification in Table 2 are driven by the agricultural Commissioner.

Turning to the Commissioner for Agriculture and the interaction terms, I find that the effects of political distance for the Commissioner responsible in this area decline as linear trends are added to the main specification. However the point estimate remains negative and statistically significant at conventional levels. A linear combination of the coefficients on *AbsDist* and *AbsDist*agriculture* in column 9 suggests that a one unit increase in political distance between a country's head of govenment and the Commissioner for Agriculture leads to a 0.33 percentage points reduction in

[13]The Netherlands received EUR 465 million in regional funds in 2006. This low number can be explained by the fact it is one of the richest countries in the EU.

the share of the agricultural budget countries receive and is significant at the one percent level. This equates to a one standard deviation increase in political distance between the Agricultural Commissioner and heads of government being associated to a 0.39 percentage points reduction in the funds transferred. For an average sized fictive country such as the Netherlands, this represents approximately a ten percent reduction in agricultural receipts and approximately EUR 180 million as of the 2006 agricultural budget.[14] Thus, the effects of political distance on budget allocation are very similar between the two budgets under this preferred specification in column 9. Studying the linear combination between the coefficient for providing the Commissioner and the interaction term between this variable and agriculture, I find that providing the Commissioner for Agriculture increases the share of agriculture transfers received by 0.62 percentage points and is significant at the five percent level. This is a slight decrease relative to the -0.78 percentage point baseline estimate in GS (2018) which does not control for political distance.

Table 3: Regression results by Commissioner

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome					*Fund Share*				
AbsDist		0.012	0.004		0.077	0.075		-0.355**	-0.353**
		(0.961)	(0.987)		(0.708)	(0.710)		(0.024)	(0.022)
*AbsDist *agri.*		-0.559*	-0.528*		-0.597*	-0.548*		-0.008	0.023
		(0.043)	(0.046)		(0.030)	(0.048)		(0.961)	(0.889)
Commissioner	1.046		1.045	1.116		1.110	0.135		0.133
	(0.575)		(0.571)	(0.404)		(0.402)	(0.825)		(0.790)
*Commissioner *agri.*	-0.056		-0.413	0.472		0.143	0.785		0.484
	(0.981)		(0.854)	(0.786)		(0.931)	(0.313)		(0.477)
Country-budget fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget lin. time trends	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Agri. refers to a dummy equals 1 for the agricultural budget. Lin. refers to linear. The control variables used in the baseline are a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

[14]The Netherlands received EUR 1,220 million in agriculture funds in 2006 and EUR 2,082 million in overall funds.

To make sure results are not driven by the smaller sample size stemming from missing values in the absolute political distance variable, Appendix Table B1 compares the baseline estimates found in GS (2018) using their larger sample versus the smaller sample used in this study. The point estimates show that both samples broadly tell the same story. The point estimate on the agricultural Commissioner declines slightly while the point estimate on the regional Commissioner increases tenfold but remains largely insignificant (p-value=0.631). This provides reassuring evidence that these results are not driven by imposed sample restrictions.

4.2 Robustness

To assess the robustness of my findings, I first evaluate the possibility that the main results on the effects of political alignment on the share of allocated funds arise from chance rather than reflect a causal relationship. I do so by verifying in Appendix Table B2 that the political distance between the Commissioner for Agriculture (resp. Regional Policy) and heads of government does not affect the share of transferred regional (resp. agricultural) funds. Reassuringly, the point estimates for political distance are of a much lower magnitude than in the baseline specification and are never significant.

The theoretical premise of this paper is that the political alignment between the Commissioners and heads of government only matters when Commissioners and national leaders are simultaneously in office. Significant lags are in theory possible if Commissioners' legacies take time to reverse. Significant leads, on the other hand, would cast serious doubts on the causal interpretation of the results. Given European elections take place every five years, Appendix Table B3 reports the results of the following:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \sum_{k=-5}^{k=5} \beta_{t+k} AbsDist_{i,f,t+k} + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_t + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \quad (3)$$

While this leads to a reduction in the sample's size, given the absence of politically affiliated heads of government and Commissioners both before 1979 and after 2006, results show that the contemporaneous effect of absolute distance remains stable and significant at the one percent level when including lags and leads to the specification. The number of significant leads and lags is not higher than what would be expected: the lead of absolute political distance in *t-4* is negative and significant at the ten percent level while the lag in *t+3* is positive and significant at the five percent level. Most importantly the leads in *t-2*, and *t-1* all have very small point estimates while the leads in *t-3* and *t-5* are of the opposite sign of the main coefficient of interest.

Next, I investigate whether the main results found in Section 4.1 are robust to alternative specifications. There is a risk in the main specification that some of the controls in equation (1) may be

affected by the treatment themselves and therefore bias the coefficient of interest. Appendix Table C1 shows that the magnitude of the point estimates declines marginally to 0.31 percentage points when lagging all controls and 0.34 percentage points when taking their first-difference.

Several controls in the baseline specification are directly connected to agriculture, which can be explained by GS (2018)'s focus on this budgetary item. Appendix Table C1 shows that excluding these controls virtually does not change the point estimate of the effect of political distance. In all cases, results remain significant at the one percent level.

Moreover, I test the robustness of results to replacing the main independent variable by a binary variable, $Diff$, equals to one if $ComLR_t$ is greater than five (and right-leaning) and $NatLeadLR_{i,t}$ is lower than five (left-leaning) in country i and year t, and vice-versa.[15] While this measure is arguably less precise and does not for example account for the fact that centre-left politicians may be closer politically to center-right politicians than far-left politicians, results shown in Appendix Table C1 are in line with the baseline. Countries which are governed by a national administration of a different LR orientation to the one of the Commissioner experience a significant at the five percent level and substantial reduction in the share of funds transferred of 0.68 percentage points.

Appendix Table C2 shows that the significance of the result remains unchanged when clustering standard errors at the country-budget and year-budget level as well as at the year and country level. The significance of the effects of interest remains unchanged.

Appendix Table C2 also shows the results of estimating the following:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \zeta_{i,t} + \rho_{f,t} + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \tag{4}$$

By including year-budget ($\rho_{f,t}$) and country-year ($\zeta_{i,t}$) fixed-effects, this specification does not account for country-budget specificities but instead accounts for specific shocks that may affect the size of the two budgets each year as well as specific shocks affecting member states each year. While this change in specification greatly changes the point estimate on providing the effect of providing the Commissioner, increasing to 2.67 percentage points, it only moderately changes the main point estimate of interest. The point estimate for political distances rises to 0.42 percentage points and stays significant at the one percent level.

Moreover, Appendix Table C2 shows the results are robust to using year-budget ($\rho_{f,t}$) rather than simply year fixed effect in the main specification :

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_{f,t} + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \tag{5}$$

In this case, the point estimate on political distance declines moderately to 0.32 percentage points

[15] Note that no head of government or Commissioner in the sample has a ParlGov LR score equals to 5

and remains significant at the one percent level while the effect of providing the Commissioner remains broadly unchanged relative to the baseline.

Recall that the two-way fixed estimator of interest in this paper can only be given a causal interpretation if the assumption of common trends between more and less treated countries is satisfied. While including control variables and country-budget specific linear trends can help mitigate such endogeneity concerns, one might still worried that the common trends assumption is violated because of unobservable nonlinear trends in the budget shares member states receive. Appendix Table C3 shows that the effect of political distance when adding squared country-budget specific trends to the baseline becomes slightly weaker but remains substantial (-0.28 percentage points) and is significant at the five percent level. It also shows that the results are broadly unchanged when using country-specific common trends rather than country-budget specific trends. The point estimate declines slightly in magnitude to -0.33 percentage points when including country specific linear trends only and increases slightly when accounting for both linear and squared common country specific trends. The effects remain significant at the one percent level in both cases.

GS (2018) argue that a potential selection-bias in their study relates to the potential for specific countries to constantly be less likely to provide the Commissioner. In this case, accounting for country-budget specific fixed-effects may not suffice if such countries also have different voting patterns. I follow GS (2018) by showing in Appendix Table C4 that the results are robust to excluding the five most populous countries in the EU (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK), which potentially have more or less interest in these specific positions. In this case the point estimate of the effect of absolute distance declines in magnitude to -0.19 percentage points but remains significant at the one percent level. Next, I also show that results are stable to excluding each EU member state individually at a time from the main sample. The point-estimates in this case are very close to the baseline and are all significant at the one percent level.

Of the 25 member states in the sample, France, Poland, Portugal, and Lithuania can be characterized as having semi-presidential systems. They differ to parliamentary systems in the sense that these countries have popularly elected heads of states who do not only act as ceremonial figureheads but may also have equal or stronger powers than their heads of government. Since the heads of state and heads of legislature may have different political ideologies, including these countries may add noise to the results, as the identity of the transfers main beneficiary may be unclear. Results remain significant at the one percent level when excluding these countries while the point estimate increases in magnitude to -0.42 percentage points, a result I discuss further in Section 5. Appendix Table C4 also shows that the effects increase slightly in magnitude (-0.38 percentage points) and are significant at the one percent level when excluding the ten countries that joined the EU in 2004. Appendix Table C4 also shows that results are robust to dropping country-budget observations for years when these specific countries provide the Commissioner in charge of the

specific budget. In this case, the point estimate declines moderately to -0.27 percentage points and remains significant at the five percent level, a result I discuss further in Section 5.

The [0-10] LR ideology of the Commissioners in charge and heads of legislatures is computed as a weighted average of the ParlGov grades based on the number of months in power in years that experience turnovers. This might add noise to the data set, particularly during election years when the transition of power may not be immediate. Excluding election years in Appendix Table C4 from the main sample leads to an increase in the magnitude of the point estimate to -0.43 percentage points, which remains significant at the one percent level. As a last heterogeneity test, I show in Appendix Table C5 that result are stable if one excludes one Commission administration at a time from the main sample consisting of eight consecutive Commission Cabinets. The point estimates range from -0.23 to -0.49 percentage points and are significant at the one percent level in all but one case, which is significant at the five percent level.

Finally, I also address questions related to negative weights and treatment heterogeneity potentially leading the fixed-effects coefficient to have an opposite sign to the average treatment on the treated (ATT) in each group and period. De Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020) show that the absolute value of the fixed-effect coefficient divided by the standard deviation of the weights is equal to the minimum value of the standard deviation of the ATT across time-period treated units under which the ATT and the linear regression coefficient may be of opposite signs. If this ratio is close to 0, the two-way fixed-effect coefficient and the ATT can be of opposite signs even under a small plausible amount of heterogeneity, while treatment heterogeneity is less of a concern if this ratio is large. Applying the Stata *twowayfeweights* command described in De Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille (2020), I find that 313 ATTs receive negative weights and that the ATT and the fixed-effect coefficient may be of opposite signs if the standard deviation of the treatment effect across the country-budget year observations is equal to 0.19, a fairly large but possible amount of heterogeneity. Observing negative weights follows naturally from the two-way fixed-effects procedure and is really only of concern in the presence of treatment heterogeneity (Jakiela, 2021). The stability of the results to the multiple sample restrictions shown in this Section, however, greatly mitigates these concerns. Furthermore, I find that there are only 41 negative weights and that the ATT and the fixed-effect coefficient may be of opposite signs if the standard deviation of the treatment effect across the country-budget year observations is equal to 0.73 when using the alternative binary measure equals to one when the Commissioner and head of government are of opposite orientations, *Diff*, as the independent variable. This suggests that the two coefficients can only be of an opposite sign under unrealistically large heterogeneity when using this variable taking only two values and with stable control groups each year, thereby further mitigating concerns related to treatment heterogeneity.

5 Mechanisms

This section investigates the mechanisms driving the results found above. One interpretation of less funds being channelled to countries run by ideological distant heads of government could be that Commissioners do not expect the funds from the EU to be put at good use in countries with administrations they ideologically strongly disagree with. In this case, it is not out of self-interest that Commissioners channel relatively less funds to these countries. An alternative could be that the Commissioners allocate more pork to political allies across the EU who are able to lobby for more funds by promising the sitting Commissioners future favors. By obtaining more funds, politically aligned national heads of government increase their chances of reelection. Having allies in power in turn benefits the sitting Commissioner' future career prospects as these allies are then the ones negotiating in favor of the Commissioner's promotion to more important EU roles following Cabinet reshuffles.

The fact that the payments are made directly to farmers and regional projects as opposed to being channeled via centralized national institutions makes the first channel *à priori* unlikely. To investigate whether the main results rather reflect the second "pork barrel" identified channel, I first test if these effects are weaker in countries where identifying whether a political ally will benefit from the payments is inherently more difficult. Specifically, I use the binary variable provided in the GS (2018) replication files indicating whether countries are run by a coalition or a single-party government. Although, the ParlGov data provides a good measure of the political ideology of country i's head of government, it does not account for the fact that the clarity of responsibility of the national leader may be diluted if a given leader is ruling with ministers from other parties. In this case, identifying who benefits from the transfers is more difficult and likely to depend on other aspects such as the balance of power within the coalition or which party controls which ministerial portfolio. The pork barrel hypothesis would therefore predict results to be weaker in coalition run countries than single-party run administrations. I formally test this hypothesis by adding interactions between the political distance and providing the Commissioner independent variables with a binary variable, *Coal*, taking value one if a given country was coalition-ruled during a given year:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \kappa AbsDist_{i,f,t} * Coal + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + \tau Comm_{i,f,t} * Coal + \xi Coal_{i,t} + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_t + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \tag{6}$$

I report the coefficient on *AbsDist*, *Comm*, and their interactions with the coalition dummy, *Coal*, in column 2 of Table 4. In line with predictions made by the pork barrel theory, a one unit increase in the constructed measure of political distance between Commissioners and heads of government leads to a 0.39 percentage points reduction in the share of funds transferred for single-party ruled countries while these effects are absent in coalition controlled countries as shown by

the large and positive coefficient on the interacted term between political distance and the coalition dummy. This is in line with the results presented in Column 3 and mentioned in Section 4.2. Conducting the same exercise but replacing *Coal* in equation 6 by a binary variable *Semi-presidential*, taking value one if the country has semi-presidential institutions, indeed shows that effects are stronger in non semi-presidential systems where the identity of the transfers' main beneficiary is also clearer. In this case a one unit increase in the absolute political distance measures is associated to a 0.37 percentage point decline in the share of funds allocated in non semi-presidential systems and is significant at the one percent level. The linear combination between *AbsDist* and its interaction with the *Semi-presidential* dummy suggests that a one unit increase in absolute political distance is associated to a 0.26 percentage points reduction in funds allocated and is significant at the five percent level.

To further explore the relevance of this "pork barrel" channel, I investigate whether more funds flow from the EC to the Commissioner's allies in pre-election years by running the following:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \kappa AbsDist_{i,f,t} * Preelection + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + \tau Comm_{i,f,t} * Preelection + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_t + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \quad (7)$$

The transfer of funds is indeed likely to electorally matter the most to incumbents when seeking their reelection. On the other hand, one would not expect the electoral electoral calendar to affect results if these were purely driven by Commissioners simply disagreeing of the use made of funds in more ideologically distant administrations. Results shown in column 3 of Table 4 support the first hypothesis. The effect of a one unit increase in the absolute political distance is associated to a 0.34 decline in the share of funds allocated in other years (significant at the one percent level) while the linear combination of the coefficient on *AbsDist* and its interaction with the pre-election dummy shows that a one unit increase in absolute political distance is associated to a 0.39 percentage points reduction in transferred funds in pre-election years.

As a final test to this hypothesis, I investigate whether Commissioners are more likely to help allies whose support they need the most following their time at the EC. Namely I investigate whether Commissioners transfer more funds to political allies in their home country. Following their mandate, European Commissioners may be interested in continuing their political career either in their home country or working for Organizations abroad. In both cases, the support of home political allies is crucial. It is indeed unlikely that Commissioners would obtain ministerial appointments in their home country once their mandate is over if the party they represent is not in power.Furthermore, the home country's administration's support is typically a pre-condition for nominations for international postings to take place (Wonka, 2007).

Table 4: Regression results - Mechanisms

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Outcome			*Fund Share*		
AbsDist	-0.350***	-0.386***	-0.373***	-0.337***	-0.334***
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.005)
*AbsDist*Coalition*		0.253			
		(0.196)			
*AbsDist*Semi-presidential*			0.112		
			(0.585)		
*AbsDist*Preelection*				-0.050*	
				(0.090)	
Commissioner	0.359	0.102	0.298	0.242	0.545**
	(0.136)	(0.814)	(0.222)	(0.238)	(0.032)
*Commissioner*Coalition*		0.868			
		(0.413)			
*Commissioner*Semi-Presidential*			0.759		
			(0.427)		
*Commissioner*Preelection*				0.412	
				(0.374)	
*AbsDist*Commissioner*					-0.141
					(0.624)
Observations	669	669	669	669	669
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific linear time trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Lin. refers to linear. The control variables used in the baseline are a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

To test this hypothesis, I run the following specification:

$$BS_{i,f,t} = \beta AbsDist_{i,f,t} + \kappa AbsDist_{i,f,t} * Comm_{i,f,t} + \lambda Comm_{i,f,t} + X'_{i,t}\gamma + \zeta_{i,f} + \rho_t + \alpha_{i,f}t + \varepsilon_{i,f,t} \tag{8}$$

In line with the aforementioned prediction, column 5 in Table 4 shows that the effect of ideological distance is stronger in countries that hold the Commissioner position: A one unit increase

in political distance is associated to a reduction in the share of funds received of 0.33 percentage points in foreign countries (significant at the one percent level) and to a 0.48 percentage points decline in the Commissioner's home country (significant at the ten percent level) when studying the linear combination of *AbsDist* and the interaction between *AbsDist* and *Comm*.

In this case, providing the Commissioner is associated to a 0.55 percentage point increase in the share of funds received meaning and is significant at the five percent level. This means that Commissioners disproportionatly favor (resp. punish) political allies (resp. rivals) in their home country relative to foreign allies (resp. rivals). A one standard deviation increase in political distance between the Commissioner's ideology and the ideology of the Commissioner's home country's head of government more than cancels out the benefits of being the country providing the Commissioner.

Taken together, these results strongly support the relevance of the second channel with Commissioners allocating more pork to political allies across the EU . These aligned heads of government are able to effectively lobby for more funds in exchange for helping the sitting Commissioners future career prospects once the Commissioners mandates are over.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I show that the ideological distance between heads of EU member state governments and the sitting Commissioners for Agriculture and Regional Policy negatively affects the respective shares of agriculture and regional funds countries receive. The most affected member states are the Commissioners' home countries, countries which are single-party ruled, and countries about to experience elections to the legislature. These results provide first hand evidence that the behavior of European Commissioners follows similar principles to national level elected decision makers and can help the debate surrounding the reform of EU institutions and the EC's role as a more or less independent actor. Despite recent demands for a more political Commission, the results presented in this paper suggest that the structures in place at the EC have, up until recently, already given it the scope to act as a political actor in the fields of agriculture and regional policy.

Avenues for future work include the study of other supranational organizations and investigating whether other Commissioners whose responsibilities cannot be directly traced back to specific budgets are also able to favor political allies.

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Appendix

A. Additional tables

Table A1: List of Commissioners for Agriculture

Name	Nation	ParlGov [0-10] LR score	from	to
Poul Dalsager	Denmark	3.801	January 20, 1981	January 6, 1985
Frans Andriessen	Netherlands	5.938	January 7, 1985	January 5, 1989
Ray McSharry	Ireland	6.071	January 6, 1989	January 5, 1993
René Steichen	Luxembourg	6.447	January 6, 1993	January 24, 1995
Franz Fischler	Austria	6.473	January 25, 1995	November 21, 2004
Sandra Kalniete	Latvia	7.303	May 1, 2004	November 21, 2004
Mariann Fischer Boel	Denmark	7.292	November 22, 2004	February 9, 2009

Sources: ParlGov and GS (2018)

Table A2: List of Commissioners for Regional Policy

Name	Nation	ParlGov [0-10] LR score	from	to
Antonio Giolitti	Italy	3.772	January 6, 1977	January 6, 1985
Grigoris Varfis	Greece	4.497	January 7, 1985	December 31, 1985
Alois Pfeiffer	Germany	3.645	January 1, 1986	August 1, 1987
Peter Schmidhuber	Germany	7.287	September 22, 1987	January 5, 1989
Bruce Millan	United Kingdom	4.356	January 6, 1989	January 24, 1995
Monika Wulf-Mathies	Germany	3.645	January 25, 1995	September 17, 1999
Michel Barnier	France	7.500	September 17, 1999	April 1, 2004
Jacques Barrot	France	7.500	April 26, 2004	November 21, 2004

Sources: ParlGov and GS (2018)

Table A3: Head of government positions by county

Country	Head of government
Austria	Chancellor
Belgium	Prime Minister
Cyprus	President
Czech Republic	Prime Minister
Denmark	Prime Minister
Estonia	Prime Minister
Finland	Prime Minister
France	Prime Minister
Germany	Chancellor
Greece	Prime Minister
Hungary	Prime Minister
Ireland	Taoiseach
Italy	President of the Council of Ministers
Latvia	Prime Minister
Lithuania	Prime Minister
Luxembourg	Prime Minister
Malta	Prime Minister
Netherlands	Prime Minister
Poland	President of the Council of Ministers
Portugal	Prime Minister
Slovakia	Prime Minister
Slovenia	Prime Minister
Spain	President of the Government
Sweden	Prime Minister
United Kingdom	Prime Minister

Table A4: Summary of variables

Agricultural fund share - AFS (%)	The agricultural fund share, refers to the agricultural funds receipts of a country (EAGGF) as a share of the overall EU agricultural budget (EAGGF). Expressed in percentages.
Regional fund share - RFS (%)	Each member state's regional and social fund (ERDF/ESF) receipts as a share of the overall annual regional funds budget. Expressed in percentages.
Fund share - FS (%)	*AFS* when studying the agricultural Commissioner and *RFS* when studying the regional Commissioner.
Placebo Fund share - PFS (%)	*RFS* when studying the agricultural Commissioner and *AFS* when studying the regional Commissioner.
ParlGov Score - [0-10]	ParlGov score of the Commissioner or the head of government in country *i* in year *t*. Weighted average of ParlGov scores if the Commissioner or head of government is appointed in year *t*.
ParlGov Distance - [0-10]	Absolute value of the difference of the ParlGov score of the Commissioner and the head of government in country *i* in year *t*.
Election Year	Dummy for election years (1 in years with a national election in country *i*, 0 otherwise).
Pre-election Year	Dummy for pre-election years (1 in the year before the national election in country *i*, 0 otherwise).
Employment Agriculture (ln)	Logarithm of the number of employees in the agricultural sector (in millions).
GVA Agriculture	Gross value added of the agricultural industry as a percentage of GDP.
Number of EU Members	Number of EU member states.
Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate (in percent).
Per Capita GDP (EU=100)	Normalized per capita gross domestic product (EU average = 100).
New Member State	Dummy for the newest member states (1 for all new members until the next enlargement, 0 otherwise).
Voting Power Council	Shapley-Shubik index of country *i* in the Council in year *t* (in %).
Domestic EU Support	The percentage of citizens who think that "EC/EU membership is a good thing". - the percentage of those who think that "EC/EU membership is a bad thing".
Commission President	Proportion of the year in which a country appointed the Commission President. A month is counted, if the respective Commissioner was in office for a majority of this month.
Commissioner	Proportion of the year in which a country appointed the Commissioner for Agriculture or Regional Policy depending on the relevant budget. A month is counted, if the respective Commissioner was in office for more than a half of this month.
Coalition	Dummy for whether country *i* in year *t* is run by a coalition government.
European Council Presidency	Binary variable that takes the value 1 if the country holds the EU Council presidency in year *t*.

Notes: Adapted from GS (2018). The authors draw all budgetary data from the annual reports of the European Court of Auditors; the economic variables on GDP, unemployment, and agriculture from Eurostat and world development indicators; the data on EU support from Eurobarometer; and the other non ParlGov related variables from Schneider (2013)

B. Validity

Table B1: Regression results - Sample restrictions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Agriculture		Regional	
Outcome	*Fund Share*		*Fund Share*	
Commissioner	0.784**	0.726**	0.033	0.297
	(0.016)	(0.030)	(0.966)	(0.631)
Observations	385	364	385	305
Country fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific linear time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
This Table compares the baseline results found in GS (2018) in columns 1 and 3 using the authors' main sample to their baseline results when estimated on this paper's restricted sample in columns 2 and 4. The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

Table B2: Regression results - Placebo fund shares

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome	*Placebo Fund Share*								
AbsDist		0.076	0.080		0.120	0.127		-0.081	-0.074
		(0.683)	(0.669)		(0.475)	(0.455)		(0.588)	(0.619)
Commissioner	0.708*		0.714*	0.390		0.426	0.390		0.276
	(0.061)		(0.055)	(0.377)		(0.351)	(0.377)		(0.376)
Observations	669	669	669	669	669	669	669	669	669
Country fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific lin. time trends	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Lin. refers to linear. Placebo fund shares refers to budgets the respective Commissioners do not have discretion over, i.e. *RFS* when studying the agricultural Commissioner and *AFS* when studying the regional Commissioner. The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

Table B3: Regression results - Leads and Lags

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Outcome	*Fund Share*			
Commissioner	0.823	0.791	0.754	0.843
	(0.148)	(0.163)	(0.200)	(0.129)
AbsDist	-0.463**	-0.460**	-0.471**	-0.438***
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.007)
AbsDist (t-1)		-0.064	-0.113	
		(0.653)	(0.439)	
AbsDist (t-2)		-0.016	-0.037	
		(0.889)	(0.755)	
AbsDist (t-3)		0.125	0.080	
		(0.339)	(0.487)	
AbsDist (t-4)		-0.275*	-0.285**	
		(0.051)	(0.032)	
AbsDist (t-5)		0.086	0.029	
		(0.623)	(0.865)	
AbsDist (t+1)		-0.008		-0.031
		(0.922)		(0.654)
AbsDist (t+2)		0.018		0.043
		(0.820)		(0.616)
AbsDist (t+3)		0.253**		0.271**
		(0.048)		(0.027)
AbsDist (t+4)		-0.015		0.024
		(0.851)		(0.792)
AbsDist (t+5)		0.086		0.062
		(0.441)		(0.579)
Observations	444	444	444	444
Country budget fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific linear time trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

C. Robustness

Table C1: Regression results - Alternative controls and independent variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Outcome	*Fund Share*				
AbsDist	-0.350***	-0.305***	-0.337***	-0.353***	
	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.001)	
$Diff$					-0.676**
					(0.019)
Commissioner	0.359	0.067	0.029	0.335	0.415
	(0.136)	(0.866)	(0.934)	(0.208)	(0.138)
Observations	669	669	645	669	669
Country budget fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Contemp.	Lagged	First-differenced	Contemp. and excl. agri. variables	Contemp.
Country-budget specific lin. time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust p-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The Diff dummy takes value one when the incumbent is left-wing and the Commissioner is right-wing or vice-versa. Left-wing is coded for ParlGov values below five and right-wing for ParlGov values above five. The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time t, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years. Agricultural control variables refer to the gross value added of the agricultural industry as a percentage of GDP and the logarithm of the number of employees in the agricultural sector (in millions). Excl. stands for excluding, agri. for agricultural, contemp. for contemporaneous and lin. for linear.

Table C2: Regression results - Alternative specifications and standard errors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome	*Fund Share*								
AbsDist	-0.350***	-0.350***	-0.350***	-0.422***	-0.422***	-0.422***	-0.321***	-0.321***	-0.321***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.008)	(0.000)	(0.010)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Commissioner	0.359	0.359	0.359	2.673***	2.673***	2.673**	0.352*	0.352	0.352**
	(0.136)	(0.238)	(0.109)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.025)	(0.077)	(0.196)	(0.034)
Observations	669	669	669	669	669	669	669	669	669
Country budget fes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Year country fes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Budget year fes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific lin. time trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Standard error clustering	Two-way country budget - year	Two-way country budget-year budget	Two-way country year	Two-way country budget - year	Two-way country budget-year budget	Two-way country year	Two-way country budget - year	Two-way country budget-year budget	Two-way country year

Notes: p-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Lin. refers to linear and fes to fixede-effects. The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time t, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

Table C3: Regression results - squared and country specific trends

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Outcome	*Fund Share*			
AbsDist	-0.350***	-0.284**	-0.325***	-0.354***
	(0.001)	(0.026)	(0.001)	(0.003)
Commissioner	0.359	0.757	0.607*	0.661**
	(0.109)	(0.104)	(0.095)	(0.015)
Observations	669	669	669	669
Country budget fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific linear time trend	Yes	Yes	No	No
Country-budget specific squared time trend	No	Yes	No	No
Country specific linear time trend	No	No	Yes	Yes
Country specific squared time trend	No	No	No	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

Table C4: Regression results - Heterogeneity tests

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Outcome	*Fund Share*														
AbsDist	-0.355***	-0.357***	-0.350***	-0.350***	-0.393***	-0.350***	-0.361***	-0.387***	-0.307***	-0.342***	-0.350***	-0.360***	-0.262***	-0.350***	-0.365***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Commissioner	0.354	0.366	0.359	0.358	0.373	0.359	0.355	0.326	0.369	0.306	0.358	0.409	0.205	0.358	0.413*
	(0.145)	(0.102)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.173)	(0.136)	(0.137)	(0.272)	(0.449)	(0.107)	(0.136)	(0.128)	(0.477)	(0.139)	(0.087)
Observations	648	618	666	666	618	666	648	620	618	622	666	618	624	666	618
Excluded	Austria	Belgium	Cyprus	CZ	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Latvia	Luxembourg
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country budget fe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget lin. time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Continued.	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)	(28)	(29)	(30)
Outcome	*Fund Share*														
AbsDist	-0.350***	-0.313***	-0.353***	-0.371***	-0.351***	-0.351***	-0.356***	-0.353***	-0.360***	-0.350***	-0.193***	-0.422***	-0.380***	-0.270**	-0.431***
	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.010)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.000)
Commissioner	0.359	0.215	0.357	0.348	0.358	0.358	0.297	0.359	0.717***	0.359	0.481**	0.364	0.457*		0.700**
	(0.136)	(0.490)	(0.136)	(0.116)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.197)	(0.133)	(0.001)	(0.136)	(0.041)	(0.187)	(0.099)		(0.019)
Observations	666	618	666	630	666	666	630	648	618	666	434	614	575	613	483
Excluded	Malta	Netherlands	Poland	Portugal	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	UK	Lithuania	Large countries	Semi-presidential systems	Post-2004 enlargement	Countries providing the Commissioner	Election years
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country budget fe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget lin. time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Large countries refer to France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK. Semi-presidential systems refer to France, Lithuania, Poland, and Portugal. These countries can be characterized by the the head of government partially sharing executive duties with a directly elected President. Countries providing the Commissioner refers to countries who provide the Commissioner of interest at that given point in time. The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time *t*, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.

Table C5: Regression results - Sensitivity to excluding specific Cabinets

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome	*Fund Share*									
AbsDist	-0.350***	-0.233***	-0.300***	-0.326***	-0.304**	-0.355***	-0.267***	-0.366**	-0.487***	-0.378***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.023)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Commissioner	0.359	0.555	-0.026	0.735	0.240	0.343*	0.646	-0.077	0.666**	0.436
	(0.136)	(0.167)	(0.897)	(0.169)	(0.513)	(0.082)	(0.127)	(0.872)	(0.012)	(0.112)
Observations	669	633	591	577	573	623	435	551	496	619
Excluded term	None	Jenkins	Thorn	Delors I	Delors II	Delors III	Delors pooled	Santer	Prodi	Barroso
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country budget fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-budget specific lin. time trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Two-way country-budget year cluster robust *p*-values in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Lin. refers to linear. The excluded term refers to the name of the Commission's President whose term years were excluded from the sample. The control variables are the ones used in the baseline: a dummy for providing the EC President, a dummy for holding the EU Council Presidency, domestic EU support, a dummy for a country that joined the EU in the latest enlargement round at time t, per capita GDP, unemployment, gross value added in agriculture, employment in agriculture, voting power at the Council, and finally dummies for whether countries are in election and pre-election years.