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EU's democratic deficit hinders more central governance

By Carel van den Berg and Sammy van Tuyll van Seroosken

From Dr Carel van den Berg and

Mr Sammy van Tuyll van Serooskerken.

Sir, Adam Posen's article, "Central power is a force for economic liberalism" (July 4) is a just criticism of those already feasting on the "death of the federalists", among them our new Dutch minister of European affairs, Frans Timmermans. On the other hand, Mr Posen overlooks the fact that the European Union does have a democratic deficit that stands in the way of more central governance.

More centralised economic governance will hardly be acceptable to the people of the Netherlands and other countries while the legitimacy of the European parliament is not being increased. At this moment, the members of the parliament are seen as acting, and too often act, along lines of purely national interest. Therefore, at present, there is no control function, no accountability at the federal level.

One way forward would be to have half of the seats of the parliament elected from European lists. A parliament legitimised in this way could choose the president of the European Commission, strengthening in turn the Commission's position vis a vis member states, which would contribute to a genuine political debate and accountability at the European level.

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