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# **Die Europäisierung des Parlaments**

Die europapolitische Rolle von  
Bundestag und Bundesrat

unter Mitarbeit von  
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## 12 Abstract

How democratic is the European Union? How legitimate are EU common policies? These are painful questions for every committed European. Indeed, concerns over the EU's democratic deficit have plagued Europeans for years. And despite attempts with each round of EU treaty reform to diminish this problem, it seems instead to grow. Each step taken to deepen integration over the last 20 years, whether this be the pursuit of a single market, a single currency or EU enlargement, has helped strengthen the idea of Europe in the public consciousness. Yet at the same time, these steps have raised questions regarding EU accountability and decision-making processes – questions that the EU has thus far inadequately addressed and without clarity.

And now it is up to each national legislative body in the EU to resolve this issue. Parliaments throughout the EU must now ensure legitimacy, democratic quality and, in so doing, generate public awareness for all things European while bringing the European cause to their citizens. Everything so woefully missed for years at the EU level has in the crisis years landed on the agendas of national parliaments. The weight of this responsibility is particularly great with respect to the German Bundestag which, as a result of the ongoing crisis, must approve massive sums of funding while, at the same time, facing a demanding Federal Constitutional Court and a public sensitive to finance issues.

It is widely acknowledged that national parliaments are confronted with a difficult situation in the context of globalization and euro-

peanization. Even those such as the Bundestag, which play a central and important role within their country's institutional balance of power, have witnessed their power and influence effectively erode each time far-reaching decisions have avoided the political sphere (business, finance) or been taken at a level beyond the national political (EU). As a result, national parliaments were likely to focus on other tasks and do little to counter their loss of influence. This raises the question: Are things different now – after years of debt crises, heated debate, landmark rulings and intensive legal reform? If so, what has changed? In which ways does the Bundestag exercise its power within European politics? With what aims? Who sets the course?

On behalf of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Europe's Future project, Christian Calliess, professor of public law and European law at the Free University in Berlin, together with Timm Beichelt, professor for European studies at the Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), set out to answer these questions. In this publication, they draw on the example of the Bundestag in analyzing where Europe's other national parliaments stand within the European Union. From the perspective of the legal and political sciences, they examine the inter- and intra-institutional relationships of each parliament (i.e, how they relate to other state bodies and their internal organization).

At the risk of over-anticipating their findings, this much can be said: The Bundestag has won influence and has the will to shape decisions – in European policymaking as well. This is not about exercising control, it is about participation.