Timm Beichelt

Germany in Europe: 
the Europeanization of German politics

MA Seminar, Winter Semester 2008/09 Session
Session: 15.01.2009: Parliamentarism and Bundestag
Field trip to Berlin

Takes place on January 22 !!

9:00  Deutscher Bundestag (EU-Ausschuss): The German Bundestag and European Policy

10:00 Meeting with a MdB (tbc)

11:30 Auswärtiges Amt (EU coordination unit): German EU policy from the government perspective
Today‘s session

I. The underlying framework: parliamentarianism
II. The Bundestag and European integration
Ia. Parliamentarism

Parliamentary regime: A regime in which parliament
- is largely responsible for political decision-making,
- decides on the annual budget,
- is responsible for interest articulation and interest aggregation,
- recruits personnel for political leadership positions,
- controls government by electoral procedures.
Ib. Parliamentarism

Discussion:

In a transnational setting, two institutions may have political power
- national governments (e.g. Council)
- transnational parliaments (e.g. EP)

What character of political decision-making can be attributed to both bodies?
II. The Bundestag and European integration

a) Institutional framework
b) European affairs committee
c) Other units, including the contact office in Brussels („Verbindungsbüro“)
d) Parliamentarians and their approach to European affairs
IIa. Institutional framework

Basic law, art. 24

(1) The Federation may by a law transfer sovereign powers to international organizations.
Basic law, art. 23

(1) With a view to establishing a united Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany shall participate in the development of the European Union that is committed to democratic, social, and federal principles, to the rule of law, and to the principle of subsidiarity, and that guarantees a level of protection of basic rights essentially comparable to that afforded by this Basic Law. To this end the Federation may transfer sovereign powers by a law with the consent of the Bundesrat.
IIa. Institutional framework

Basic law, art. 23

(2) The Bundestag and, through the Bundesrat, the Länder shall participate in matters concerning the European Union. The Federal Government shall keep the Bundestag and the Bundesrat informed, comprehensively and at the earliest possible time.

(3) Before participating in legislative acts of the European Union, the Federal Government shall provide the Bundestag with an opportunity to state its position. The Federal Government shall take the position of the Bundestag into account during the negotiations. Details shall be regulated by a law.
Gesetz über die Zusammenarbeit von Bundesregierung und Deutschem Bundestag in Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union (EUZBBG)


§5 Die Bundesregierung gibt vor ihrer Zustimmung zu Rechtsetzungsakten der Europäischen Union dem Bundestag Gelegenheit zur Stellungnahme. Die Frist zur Stellungnahme muß so bemessen sein, daß der Bundestag ausreichend Gelegenheit hat, sich mit der Vorlage zu befassen. Die Bundesregierung legt die Stellungnahme ihren Verhandlungen zugrunde.
Ilb. European affairs committee

- Committee for external affairs
- Late 1980s: Maastricht treaty committee
- Since 1993 – Basic Law, Art. 45: “The Bundestag shall appoint a Committee on European Union Affairs. It may authorize the committee to exercise the rights of the Bundestag under Article 23 vis-à-vis the Federal Government”
IIb. European affairs committee

- Competences:
  - General European affairs (treaties, enlargement)
  - All European affairs in secondary debating function
Ilc. Other units

– Department/unit PA – 1
– Contact office in Brussels ("Verbindungsbüro") since early 2007
– Regular Bundestag committees
What system do German parliamentarians prefer? (1996/97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intergovernmentalism</th>
<th>Parliamentarization of the EU</th>
<th>Multi-Level-System</th>
<th>Strengthening of both Parliaments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German Members of the Bundestag</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Members of Parliament</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Members of EP</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of EP in general</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weßels (2003: 375)
Discussion:

Imagine you are a member of the German Bundestag. Would you deliberately choose to get involved in European policy? Collect arguments for and against such a decision.