



# EuParl.net Newsletter

**EU  
PARL  
NET**

European Information and  
Research Network on  
Parliamentary History

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## NEWS



Left to right: Andreas Schulz, Jure Gašparič, Carla van Baalen, Sina Krüger, Adéla Gjuričová, Pasi Ilahainen

## Prague Meeting of EuParl.net Board of Directors

The Board of Directors held their annual meeting on 10 April 2017 at the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. The board discussed the current projects as well as planned activities, adopted new members, and decided on a new system of sharing the EuParl.net administration between the Czech Institute of Contemporary History, KGParl in Berlin and the History of Parliament Trust in London. The board members also visited the Czech Chamber of Deputies; and got to know about its historical roots, about how baroque palaces used to be reconstructed during the socialist era, and what are the necessities for MPs offered in the parliament shop.

## The Network's New Members

EuParl.net is spreading further south and east, adopting new members from Romania (Sorin Radu from Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu), Russia (Alexander Semyonov from National Research University-Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg), and Italy (Stefano Cavazza from the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna). We would like to extend a very warm welcome from all of us at EuParl.net!

## Dear readers,

*In the past two years Europe has witnessed a number of dramatic elections, with traditional ideological parties losing an ever bigger share to anti-political, protest or populist groupings. The Brexit referendum even drew one of the principal members of our network out of the EU. The EuParl.net is a community of researchers who want to contribute to the debate on current difficulties of democratic politics by providing the historical and social background, while preserving the principal faith in parliamentary democracy, the European integration, and intellectual discussion.*

*You are receiving this EuParl.net newsletter after a break caused by moving the network administration from The Hague to Prague and Berlin. Our aim now is to make it a more useful tool for all those who are interested in parliamentary history, in parliaments as institutions and in all the dilemmas that European democracies are facing nowadays.*

*We would be very pleased to receive any comments you may have at [eu-parl@usd.cas.cz](mailto:eu-parl@usd.cas.cz).*

*Adéla Gjuričová*





## PROJECTS

### Fraktionsprotokolle of the German Bundestag

You need the German perfectionism to actually record parliamentary parties during their internal meetings. And you need KGParl in Berlin to make these perfectly accessible for everyone. »Fraktionen im Deutschen Bundestag 1949–1990« is an exceptional project which has published editions of the records from four parliamentary fractions in the seven terms of 1949-1976 and created an online research tool available at [www.fraktionsprotokolle.de](http://www.fraktionsprotokolle.de). The project will continue to work on making all records of the “old” West German Bundestag till 1990 accessible.



### Time, Space, Communities and Memory of the British Parliament

The History of Parliament will be embarking on a three-year research project funded by the British Academy

and Wolfson Foundation. History’s Director, Paul Seaward, will explore the nature of parliaments’ institutional life: what are the ideas and practices that create a vigorous and viable institution, and what are the challenges that might threaten it. The History of Parliament has appointed a new Director to take charge over the next three years: Stephen Roberts, currently editor of the History’s 1640-1660 project.

### Comparative Studies in Parliamentary History at the University of Jyväskylä

The four-year Academy of Finland Project “Supra- and Transnational Foreign Policy versus National Parliamentary Government, 1914-2014” is approaching its end. The rich output includes an international workshop on the relation of parliaments and the executive in creating different countries’ foreign policies. The project also published Pasi Ilahainen’s »Spirings of Democracy« that compares British, German, Swedish and Finnish debates on revolution, democracy and parliamentarism in the late 1910s (for more details, see below). The follow-up project should focus on crises of legitimacy in representative governments with a comparative and transnational perspective.

### The House of Orange under Scrutiny

Carla van Baalen from the Dutch Centre for Parliamentary History/Montesquieu Institute was appointed the head of a committee of inquiry concerning the finances of the Royal Family of the Netherlands. The committee is investigating a supposed deal between the

Dutch government and the House of Orange in the late 1960s, which permitted the royal family to avoid paying full property taxes.

### Czech Ministry supports EuParl.net

Adéla Gjuričová from the Institute of Contemporary History in Prague received a 3-year grant from the Czech Ministry of Education within the Inter-Excellence scheme. This will make it possible for the Institute to take a share of the EuParl.net administration, improve the network’s presentation, and refurbish the website and newsletter to become more useful research tools.

## EVENTS

### Powers, Debates, Norms

Annual Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions, Orleans, 5-8 Sept. 2017. Jean Garrigue brought the ICHRPI annual congress with over a hundred presentations to his home university in Orleans. Adéla Gjuričová presented a report on EuParl.net’s activities and plans during the session on parliaments in transition.





## EVENTS

### Parliaments and Popular Sovereignty: Political Representation in the British world, 1640-1886

Conference, 3-4 Nov. 2017, Manchester. Conference website: <https://parliamentsandpopularsovereignty-conference.wordpress.com/>

### Parliaments, the Executive and Foreign Policy in Comparative and Transnational Perspectives

International conference, Jyväskylä, 18-20 June 2017. Panels and speakers: <https://www.jyu.fi/en/congress/history/foreignpolicy2017/programme>

### Thinking about the Revolution. 100 Years After

International Conference, Ljubljana, 24 Oct. 2017. The Slovenian Institute of Contemporary History organized an academic event to re-think the legacy of the October Revolution in Russia.

**Misliti o revoluciji: 100 let pozneje**

Thinking About the Revolution: 100 Years After



Mednarodna konferenca na Inštitutu za novejšo zgodovino v Ljubljani  
24. oktober 2017

International Conference at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, Slovenia  
24 October 2017

Andreas Schulz and Alexander Semyonov discussed the role of the Duma and soviets in their panel.

### The State of Political History

International conference, The Hague, 30 Nov. & 1 Dec. 2017. The National Research School for Political History OPG proposed to explore whether political history still has a core of shared topics, problems and concepts, what we mean when we study politics, and in what cases politics intrudes into political history. Conference website: <https://www.aanmelder.nl/ogp>

## SAVE THE DATE

Political Controversies Relating to Social Security Reforms for the Elderly in Post-War Europe: Conference, Nijmegen, **19-20 April 2018**

The birth of the Czech National Council in 1968: Workshop, Prague, **May 2018**

A Century of Women MPs: Conference, London, **6-7 September 2018**. Call for papers: <https://acenturyof-womenmpsconference.wordpress.com/call-for-papers/>

ICHRPI International Conference: Vienna, **10-13 Sept. 2018**

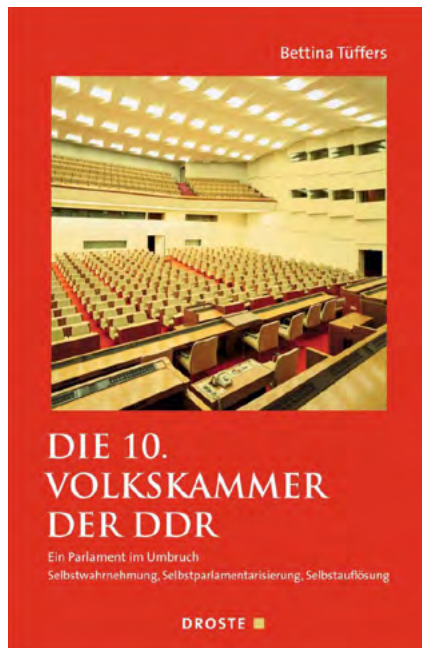
## ESSAY



„It cannot be that you raise your hands when you do not know anything! This is no Federal Assembly!“

By Oldřich Dvořák. *Dikobraz*, 5 March 1990, p. 4

## REVIEW



TÜFFERS, Bettina: *Die 10. Volkskammer der DDR: Ein Parlament im Umbruch. Selbstwahrnehmung, Selbstparlamentarisierung, Selbstauflösung*. Düsseldorf, Droste 2016

The term of the 10<sup>th</sup> Volkskammer, the first and last freely elected parliament of the German Democratic Republic, lasted only several months, from the middle of March to early October 1990. And yet it is associated with a number of myths and stereotypes. It is supposed to have been a parliament of enthusiasts, eager to work during the “countless marathon sessions,” a parliament with no empty seats. Bettina Tüffers has made an attempt to verify these statements and in doing so she has managed to create a much more complicated, though a more parliamentary, picture. Within her research project at KGParl in Berlin, the author explored the last Volkskammer as a “communication space.” She was therefore interested in the legislature’s media image, the symbols and staging strategies used by new MPs as well as their “learning process,” a special sort of elementary parliamentary socialization. The key concept of *self-parliamentarization* enabled Tüffers to present the specific political culture of a

legislature in transition and also explain it as a process of assimilation, of adopting the institutional rules and patterns in spite of the lack of personal, political and administrative continuity.

Her analysis is based predominantly on visual material, rather than archives or daily press, used more like an illustration for phenomena found in the videos. Live broadcasts from plenary sessions were an absolute novelty which was supposed to ensure public control of the previously uncontrollable legislature. Tüffers’ effort results in a very lively and colourful picture of parliamentary life and legislative process from an insider perspective. And yet, this insider angle also represents a weak point, in fact the only serious one we can find in the otherwise excellent book. The whole description remains in the parliamentary building, in the plenary hall and the meetings of fractions. Their records indeed are an amazing source, but there is a world out there as well: the missing context includes the external politics of re-unification, including other political actors such as the government, the progress of party formation, de-communization debates, and the changing electorate.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Volkskammer was elected with a voter turnout of 93.39 percent. However, this parliament possessed only a limited mandate of facilitating one side of the German re-unification, while committing an institutional suicide. Following October 3, only about one third of the Volkskammer deputies were delegated to the Bundestag for a short period up to the first all-German election in December 1990. Nonetheless, even the short-lived Volkskammer produced some amazing political careers. This was the place for which the current Prime Minister Angela Merkel left her institute and today’s German President Joachim Gauck his church. Bettina Tüffers has succeeded in persuading us that it was these unpredictable dynamics that made the 10<sup>th</sup> Volkskammer special.

Petr Roubal

Institute of Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

## BOOKS / SOURCES

ILAHAINEN, Pasi: *The Springs of Democracy: National and Transnational Debates on Constitutional Reform in the British, German, Swedish and Finnish Parliaments, 1917-1919*. Helsinki, Finnish Literature Society 2017 – open access [here](#)

VAN BAALEN, Carla – VAN KESSEL, Alexander (eds.): *Kabinetformaties 1977-2012*. Amsterdam, Boom 2016

GUERRIERI, Sandro: *Un Parlamento oltre le nazioni. L’Assemblea Comune della CEE e le sfide dell’integrazione europea (1952-1958)*. Bologna, Il Mulino 2016

MAATSCH, Aleksandra: *Parliaments and the Economic Governance of the European Union: Talking Shops or Deliberative Bodies?* London and New York, Routledge 2017

HEFTLER, Claudia – NEUHOLD, Christine – ROZENBERG, Olivier – SMITH, Julie (eds.): *The Palgrave Handbook of National Parliaments and the European Union*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan 2015

DAMON, Mario – HAEMERS, Jelle – MANN, Alastair (eds): *Political representation: communities, ideas and institutions in Europe (c. 1200 - c. 1650)*. Leiden, Brill 2016

*The European Parliament Historical Archives* offer an online multimedia gallery which includes oral history interviews of Presidents and General Secretaries as well as a poster collection. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/multimedia-gallery.html>



Campaign before the 1994 EP elections in the Netherlands. Source: EP Historical Archives, Multimedia Gallery, Poster Collection.