



INSTITUT FÜR HÖHERE STUDIEN
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
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PUBLIC LECTURE

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"Is Anyone Listening? On the Communication Function of National Parliaments in the EU"

Friday, March 25, 2011, 16:30 pm
IHS, Stumpergasse 56
1060 Vienna, Lecture Room SZ VI

Over the last 20 years, the role of national parliaments in EU affairs has gained considerable academic attention. Much of the literature has focused on the parliamentary control function and shown that national parliaments are no longer docile lambs willing to be led to the European slaughtering block, but exercise tighter scrutiny of their governments in EU affairs. What tends to be overlooked, however, is that the parliamentary communication function is at least as important in EU politics. Democratic legitimacy depends not only on parliamentary influence, but also on a vibrant public debate on political solutions and alternatives to allow citizens to make informed political (electoral) choices and to exercise democratic control. Yet while the literature has discussed reasons why MPs (or political parties) may prefer to 'depoliticise' EU issues by conducting their EU business away from the prying eye of the public, so far there is little empirical data on how parliaments communicate EU politics and whether they actually reach their citizens.

In this lecture, Katrin Auel will present an ongoing research project on the communication function of national parliaments in EU affairs and provide first comparative empirical data on parliamentary debates on EU issues.

Katrin Auel is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Transformation Studies of the European University Viadrina Frankfurt/Oder. Her research focuses on Europeanisation, legislative studies, and multilevel governance (EU, German federalism) with a particular interest in the role of national parliaments in EU affairs. Recent publications include 'Missing the Point: The Decision of the German Constitutional Court on the Lisbon Treaty and the Democratic Deficit of the EU' (Notre Europe Studies and Research 78, 2010) and 'Between Reformstau and Länder Strangulation? German Cooperative Federalism Re-Considered' (Regional & Federal Studies 20:2, 2010). She is also co-editor of 'The Europeanisation of Parliamentary Democracy' (Journal of Legislative Studies 11:3-4, 2005).