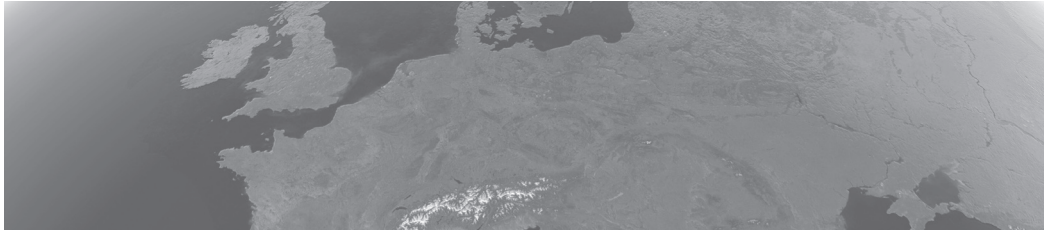


# Representative Government in Modern Europe



Fifth Edition





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Michael Gallagher  
Michael Laver  
Peter Mair

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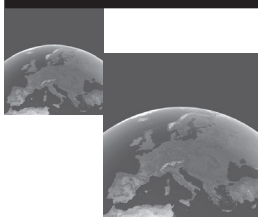
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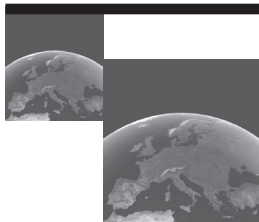
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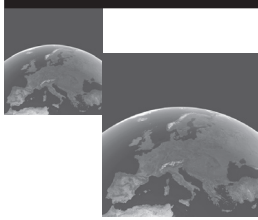
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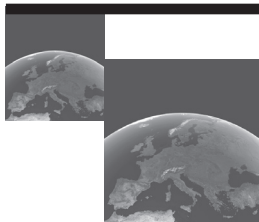


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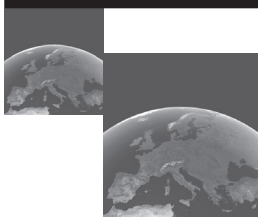
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# Preface

This is the fifth edition of *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. The very fact that there is a fifth edition is evidence of continuing demand for a book that deals in a comprehensive way with the politics of representation in an area of the world that contains a goodly proportion of the world's democracies. Especially since the transitions to democracy in central and eastern Europe, which had not even begun when we wrote the first edition, but which have now for the most part put down strong roots, modern Europe is a rich field of study for anyone who is interested in representative government. Set in the context of the full range of political arrangements we find distributed over the entire planet, there are important ways in which the representative democracies of modern Europe all look quite similar, sharing many common cultural, economic and historical traditions. At the same time, they also differ from each other in systematic and important ways.

As before, our discussions of representative government in modern Europe cover countries that have joined the European Union (EU) plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The latter three are unquestionably part of modern Europe but, for reasons that mostly have to do with domestic politics, they remain outside the EU. Since the last edition, however, the EU has expanded to comprise 27 member states, with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. These countries are now included in this book. Taking the 30 countries we now study there are, more than ever, big variations in the types of electoral and party system we encounter, in the ways the administration of the state is organized, and in many other matters besides. We learn a lot from analysing the political impact of these variations, while holding constant the broad 'European' context. Homing in on the effects of particular causal factors, while holding as much as we can constant, is the essence of the comparative method. This makes modern Europe an extraordinarily good laboratory for anyone with a serious interest in representative government, and this is true whether or not Europe is the region they most want to know about. This, in short, is a book both for readers who are interested in modern Europe and for readers who are interested in comparative politics more generally, and see Europe as an excellent laboratory for exercising their ideas.

While expanding our country coverage we have been careful to retain the fundamental philosophy that has guided this book through its various editions and, to judge from the feedback we receive, is a major part of its appeal to readers. Our discussions are structured by what we see as the major substantive and intellectual themes in the study of representative government. We try as far as possible to discuss the full range of European countries, large and small, in the context of these themes, rather than organizing the book as a set of country studies. We have tried to keep the book as up to date as possible in its discussions of ongoing theoretical and empirical work on core features of representative government in modern Europe. Reviews of the book have stressed its value in introducing readers to current debates among those who analyse European politics, and this edition sets out to keep our discussion of these debates as up to the minute as possible. Naturally, we have also updated the data in most tables to make these as complete and current as possible.

The internet is increasingly the prime source of information for those looking to keep abreast of politics in Europe. In some chapters we have supplied a list of internet resources – sites that are particularly useful or, as specialist sites, possibly obscure – but in others we place our trust in the readers' own web navigation skills, not least because, in our experience, students are at least as likely to inform us about useful sites as we are to inform them.

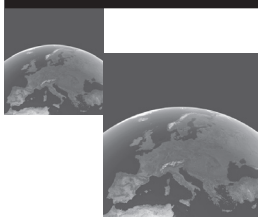
We have been helped enormously while producing this fifth edition by advice and assistance from friends, colleagues and anonymous reviewers – far too many to list here. We are also grateful for the great help given to us in keeping things up to date by our researchers, many of whom also made significant intellectual contributions to the revised manuscript. These were: Fernando Casal Bertoa, Iulia Cioroianu, Drew Conway, Pablo Fernandez-Vazquez, Alex Herzog, Marko Klasnja, Didac Queralt Jimenez and David Willumsen.

What above all encouraged us to produce a fifth edition is that we remain every bit as intrigued by and enthused about the study of modern European politics as we were when we wrote the first edition over 20 years ago. Indeed, the events of recent decades have shown beyond all doubt why it is that developing a good understanding of political processes in general, and of representative government in particular, is such an important intellectual project.

Michael Gallagher

Michael Laver

Peter Mair

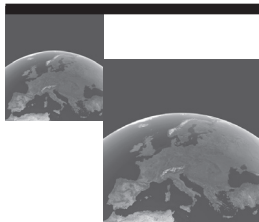


## About the Authors

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