

## **‘Party Politics as Usual? The Role of Political Parties in the European Union’**

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**Abstract:** Scholars have raised doubts about the ability of political parties to fulfil their traditional role as 'transmission belts' between citizens and legislators in the EU. We discuss how the different institutional environment of the EU affects the assumptions and predictions of theories of political parties developed for the national context and discuss how political parties can influence EU legislative decision-making. We distinguish between partisan effects in the electoral and legislative arena, and argue for a clear distinction between the effects of national parties, national party delegations and transnational party groups when studying EU party politics. The empirical literature shows that, whereas parties play a role in most institutions, they are not always the dominant players, and their effect varies both across and within these institutions.

**Keywords:** Democratic deficit; European Union; legislation; political parties; political representation