Conclusion

Modern parliamentary representation has come to dominate contemporary thinking on representation. Yet, representation is a concept so central to human thinking, and so crucial for the workings of all kinds of societies and states that, on many occasions, we barely become aware of the workings of representation when it takes place, such as when we see a national flag on the street or witness the transubstantiation at Mass. Representation appears in different disguises and works in different ways. As a general rule, it needs to be based on commonalities that become expressed by way of representation and in this way representation enables a collective imagining of a power that is pictured as being absent. As a result, representation is a means to bring about integration and it may serve as a means to enable a community to act and to legitimise rule.

According to Max Weber, legitimacy has two basic parameters: normative bases of legitimacy that make a political system function as the incarnation of ideas and the factual subjects' belief in a system's legitimacy. Whilst the belief in legitimacy by those subjected to the rule is ultimately decisive for a system's legitimacy, it is related to the normative bases which, in turn, constitute an 'assignment' to the rulers. The leading ideas of the EU's legitimacy are to build cohesion in the form of 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe' and to make possible solutions to common problems that cannot be elaborated at national level alone.

The workings of representation are closely related to these bases of legitimacy, inasmuch as they bring about integration and meet the pre-condition for the Union to be able to act as such. Given the current challenges of European integration, the principle question of this study was whether the Union is endowed with a representational scheme suited to bringing about integration and allowing the Union to act as such, and

thereby meeting the theoretical pre-condition for European citizens' belief in the Union's legitimacy.

On the whole, the Union brings together a range of different types of representation. At the institutional level, territorial and functional, executive and parliamentary, corporate and symbolical representation come to be expressed. At the same time, the European Union serves as an arena for the factual representation of interest groups. Institutional and factual group representation work in different ways and are related differently to the Union's bases of legitimacy. Institutional representation is suited to bringing about political integration and enabling the Community to act. On the other hand, factual group representation is suited to bringing about social integration in that it stands for the diversity of interests within European societies. Factual group representation is subordinated to institutional representation, and the public authorities need to regulate interest group participation in politics in order to prevent it from undermining the principle of equality which is central to democracy.

As in any other political system *institutional interest representation* at the European level is characterised by the combination of different types of representation. The workings of all these types together can be imagined as being to bring about the integration of the various levels and aspects of European governance and to enable the Union to act as such if, it was argued, their respective representational schemes and that of the Union as a whole are consistent and fit the current context of both contemporary thinking on representation and the state of European integration.

In general, European institutional representation adequately gives expression to the various levels and aspects of European governance: The Union's institutional representational scheme is composed of the representation of the European peoples, member state governments, categories of functional interests and the subnational level, and finally the representation of the European general interest. While most of these representational forms can be found in other political systems, the Commission's type

of representation is a feature specific to the Union's institutional architecture. The institutionalised representation of the general interest by the Commission strengthens the overall workings of representation at the European level. The Commission functions like a veritable corporate body and embodies European integration as such. Thus, representation by the Commission allows for the collective imagining of European integration which would otherwise remain abstract. Furthermore, the weighted national quotas on which the composition of the institutions under investigation is based mostly reflect adequately the overall construction of the European Union as they combine the equal representation of member states and representation proportional to population. Furthermore, these two guiding principles are balanced differently depending on the institutions' mission and purpose. The distribution of seats or votes outbalances the need for properly representing the European peoples and the need for accommodating the heterogeneity of member states in terms of sizes. However, in some cases the notion of a balance of power in Europe has a disturbing effect on the balanced allocation of seats or votes. This concerns the coupling of the 'big four' member states and the under-representation of some of the joining member states. With regard to the Commission's composition, the underlying principle of equal member state representation bears the danger of seriously undermining the Commission's mandate and, as a consequence, its capacity to embody the European general interest. Lastly, in the case of the Economic and Social Committee the application of the general type of creation modus leads to a significant inconsistency of the representational scheme because the commonalities which are being expressed in the ESC are functionally-defined and, therefore, its composition cannot be based on the representation of individual citizens.

Most significantly, the distribution of powers between the European Parliament and the Council neither reflects the fact that what was an Economic Community has now turned into a political Union, nor does it fit the general contemporary thinking on the centrality of parliamentary representation. Here, it is not sufficient to simply bestow more powers on the Parliament. It is equally important to change the current situation

wherein the Council as the most powerful of the Union's institutions is also its weakest institution in terms of representation. Since the development of corporate representation, the idea that an institutional representative body can only be regarded as such if it acts by its majority (regardless of how the majority may be defined) has become part of the overall concept of representation. Thus, in all cases where the Council acts on the grounds of unanimity, it simply cannot be regarded as acting as a representative body, and, as a corollary, the workings of representation do not take place. From this perspective, majority voting in the Council does not weaken the Union's legitimacy, nor is its use primarily a question of efficiency. Rather, the use of majority voting makes the Council a representative body. In doing so it strengthens the representational dimension of European integration and, in this way, is suited to having an overall positive effect on the Union's legitimacy.

Factual group representation at the European level, it was argued, is suited to bringing about social integration if the European interest group sector mirrors the diversity of interests within European societies. Due to the considerable pluralization of the European interest group sector it can, indeed, be regarded as bringing about social integration. However, the sum of European-level interest groups cannot be imagined as an exact mirror of all the interests existing in European societies, firstly because it is a misleading conception that interest groups give expression to all possible interests, and secondly, because the interests to which the European interest group sector gives expression are not confined to European borders. On the whole, a categorical newness can be witnessed with regard to the European interest group sector that more or less matches that of the European Union. As regards the regulation by public authorities and their attempts to shape the landscape of European interest groups the action taken so far was mostly geared towards further pluralization and to assuring open and equal access to the governmental process which are both central elements in making interest group activities fit into the framework of pluralist democracy. Here, it is notable that the actions directed towards interest groups have increasingly come to be informed by the

Union's quest for legitimacy. Now, interest groups are mostly framed as 'civil society (organisations)'. This, in turn, points to a general approach to European integration which is still informed by a technocratic understanding of politics.

Whilst the Union is about to strip off its identity as a technocratic body that is primarily geared towards producing output legitimacy in the form of efficient policies and is about to become a political community proper, in some aspects the orientation toward technocratic rule coupled with a mechanistic view on legitimacy still prevails. The latter approach can be found in the official reform discourse where the notion of 'efficiency' is predominant, and in Commission documents in which the 'representation of expertise' is seen to be central to producing the 'right' political solution based on 'the facts', or the underlying assumption of which is that interest groups could have a direct, and even measurable, effect on public support.

Throughout its history the Community has demonstrated that it is capable of adapting itself to changed circumstances. The recent reforms affecting the representational scheme of the European Union (understood here as being comprised of institutional and factual group representation) and the ongoing reform debate react to the current challenges stemming from the proceeding deepening and widening. In order to be able to cope with these challenges the Union needs to be endowed with a working representational scheme. Here, the present representational scheme is already a good starting point for further reform. Yet, from all the weaknesses that have been pointed out throughout the applied part of this study a substantial change is vital for the Union's future endurance: To institute a bicameral legislative system and to make both the European peoples and the member states parties to the founding Treaties would end the major inconsistency in the Union's representational scheme and constitute a central pre-condition for a Union which can cope with its current challenges. This, in turn, would pave the way for a different understanding of policy-making at the European level according to which 'good' politics are the result of interest articulation and

intermediation. The European Union could then be the arena wherein member states and their citizenries settle their conflicts and agree on solutions to common problems.