Political parties, once seen as the guarantors of democracy, are under increasing pressure. Modernisation, communication technology and individualisation challenge the crucial function of parties: linking citizens and the state. This dissertation investigates to what extent EU integration can be added to the factors impinging upon parties. It documents how political parties have fared in the performance of three important tasks: recruitment of candidates, aggregation of interests and mobilisation of voters. The results show that parties have been rather successful in coping with these challenges. Parties are indeed confronted with decreasing membership and a volatile electorate, but they manage to fit new issues into existing programmatic frameworks and they have actually increased their grip on the selection of political personnel. In that sense, ‘Europe’ confirms the ability of parties to adapt to an environment that is constantly in flux.

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