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## Parties' Transnational Coordination in the EU after Lisbon

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## Summary

This dissertation aims to answer the question of how political parties in the European Union (EU) coordinate beyond national borders with other parties of the same party 'family'. The main finding is that parties' transnational coordination in the EU is much confined to the European Parliament (EP) institutional setting.

The dissertation consists of a collection of four separate academic articles. The first article examines how national parties use the elections to the EP as a 'back door' to national politics. It is a case-study on how the French Greens used the 2009 EP elections as an opportunity to improve their position vis-à-vis their domestic rivals in French politics and to establish independent parliamentary groups in both France's national chambers in the aftermath of their success in the EP elections.

The second article analyses the potential development of Europarties as genuine transnational parties by an in-depth case-study of the Individual Supporters' Network of the European Green Party (EGP). The article illustrates the limited implementation of the EGP's individual membership scheme due to the national Green parties' reluctance to cooperate with it and to the lack of interest among individual party members.

The third article deals with the EP groups as diplomatic actors, studying the stances and activities of left-wing EP groups on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the EP groups have a certain potential to develop an independent diplomatic role, this potential is hindered by substantial disagreements between the national parties' delegations within the EP groups. In fact, when EP groups disagree on issues which are considered salient for voters 'at home', the national parties' transnational coordination in the EP is restricted to the lowest common denominator.

The fourth article provides a comparative overview of MEPs' formal participation rights in the national parliaments and offers an analytical distinction between two different roles MEPs play in the chambers - EU experts and national representatives at the EU-level. This section is followed by an assessment of MEPs' participation in the work of the national parliament of the Member State in which they are elected, based on a unique survey conducted among MEPs, accounting for cross-national and cross-party variation of vertical interparliamentary coordination.

**Keywords:** European Union; Political parties; Europarties; Transnational party federations; European Parliament; National parliaments, Parliamentary diplomacy; Inter-Parliamentary cooperation.