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Abstract

From the perspective of Political Science, the concepts of political systems and government leadership offer useful research tools by which we may study the substantial changes upon political life in Europe. There is a sharp decrease of civic trust in political institutions and the political staff and of the interest in political affairs in general, while some of the fundamental democratic principles are being challenged. The stability of the political systems stems from their capacity to transform claims about public problems into efficient policies with a view to securing the sustainability of the state and the resilience of democratic institutions. Stability is not synonymous with stagnation. On the contrary, much like a computer system, a political system needs regular upgrade of its institutions ("hardware") as much as of each public policies ("software") in order

to catch-up with rapid changes and challenges. Guiding policy and institutional adaptation is the overarching responsibility of government leadership, and the ultimate criterion for its assessment. In the context of the European Union (EU), government leaderships have the advantage of sharing competencies and some indispensable resources. In the meantime, a common framework is set-up for the comparative assessment of government efficiency in accordance with the common tasks and the specific data of policy results. In the present textbook, three specific cases will be distinguished - Greece, France and Germany - which make explicit the different kinds of challenges for government leaderships, the specific factors of destabilization and the significance of a systematic assessment of government efficiency especially with regard to economic governance in the EU.

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