



*Annual Report  
and Activities Overview 2014*

## OVERVIEW 2014

### Parliaments

parliamentwatch.org as a permanent offering for:

- German Bundestag (federal parliament)
- German Members of the European Parliament
- 11 State parliaments

Abroad:

- Luxembourg: politikercheck.lu
- Austria: meinparlament.at
- Ireland: dailwatch.ie
- Tunisia: marsad.tn
- France: questionnezvoselus.org
- Greece: vouliwatch.gr

### Elections

parliamentwatch.org on five elections (2014):

- Elections European Parliament
- Saxony state elections
- Thuringia state elections
- Brandenburg state elections
- Mayor elections in Wuppertal

### Awards

- Grimme Online Award 2005 and 2007 (nomination)
- Ashoka Fellowship - Gregor Hackmack 2008
- Fairness Initiative Award 2010
- Young Global Leader - Gregor Hackmack 2010
- German Prize for Civic Engagement 2011 (audience award)
- More Democracy through IT Prize 2012, integrata foundation
- Democracy Award 2013

### Media Partnerships

- Candidate check with SPIEGEL, WELT, ZDF and ten other Media Partners
- Bundestagsradar at SPIEGEL ONLINE
- Abgeordnetenquartett at SPIEGEL ONLINE
- Landtagslupe at wdr.de

Tie-Ins at:

- spiegel.de
- t-online.de
- sueddeutsche.de
- and approximately 50 regional newspaper portals

## VISION and APPROACH

Our vision is an empowered society. We want to advance empowerment by creating more opportunities for citizens' participation and greater transparency and accountability in politics.

parliamentwatch.org is our tool - a web platform enabling German citizens to ask their questions publicly to their MPs and MEPs, to their representatives in eleven state parliaments, and in twelve municipal councils. parliamentwatch.org also documents the voting behaviour and the extra earnings of representatives. For our blog, we research and report on topics such as participation and transparency in politics.

## CONTENTS

5	Preface
6	10 years parliamentwatch.org
10	Problem & Solution
14	Our Effects 2014
16	Organisation
18	Ecological and Societal Profile
20	Financial Overview 2014
22	Our Team

### Subject Matter and Scope:

The following report relates to the activities of the organisations Parlamentwatch e.V. and Parlamentwatch GmbH for the period of 1st of January 2014 to 31st of December 2014. The organisations' official residence is Mittelweg 12, 20148 Hamburg, Germany.

Parlamentwatch e.V. is registered with the Hamburg district court's register of associations under VR 19479. Parlamentwatch GmbH is registered with the Hamburg district court under HRB – 98928.

As of 2009 the reports by both organisations are based on the Social Reporting Standard (SRS). This report uses the SRS Version 2014. Please direct any questions concerning this report to [info@abgeordnetenwatch.de](mailto:info@abgeordnetenwatch.de).

## The parliamentwatch.org Board:



Boris Hekele



Gregor Hackmack

# Preface

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
dear [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) Supporters,

This year was our anniversary year. On 8th of December 2004, [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) celebrated its tenth anniversary.

Ten years ago it was only the two of us. On the 8th of December 2004 we invited to a big press conference to introduce [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) in Hamburg. One journalist followed the invitation. Nonetheless, there was a small article in the size of a matchbox in the local paper. We hoped and were anxious that anyone at all would use the newly established platform to ask MPs. After all, 2004 was the time before Facebook and Twitter. We were hardly able to advertise [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) by ourselves. Five questions and also one direct answer followed on the next day. Citizens asked - MPs answered. [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) was born!

Ten years later, the then small, voluntary project (the only expenses were our server costs of four euros per month) has become the world's largest digital voters' archive. Meanwhile, [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) is active during every federal state parliament (Landtag), federal parliament (Bundestag) and EU Parliament election. Accordingly, MPs of the federal parliament (since 2006), the European parliament (since 2009) and most federal state parliaments can be questioned online. On 31st of December 2014, 174,814 questions and 140.947 answers were saved on the platform. All questions and answers are accessible at any time.

However, [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) has evolved over the years. In 2010 our blog went online. In our blog we regularly report on issues surrounding transparency as well as participation, while uncovering abuse and violation. In 2014, our research on members of the federal parliament and their extra earnings made large headlines. We revealed that the MP Peter Gauweiler, who resigned from his position in March 2015, additionally earned more than one million Euro in less than a year.

In 2012, we launched our first online petition. The claim: to define the bribery of MPs as a criminal act in Germany. And eventually: two years and over 50.000 signatures later bribery of MPs is punishable in Germany. Thus, Germany was finally able to ratify the UN Convention against Corruption in 2004 - What a nice gift for our tenth birthday!

During the last decade, the founding duo has evolved into a team with fixed and freelance staff as well as even more volunteers. The huge positive effect for greater transparency and participation in politics is a real team effort. We would like to thank the whole [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) team (staff, trustees and volunteers) for their continued commitment.

Big thanks also go to all the donors who guarantee our independence and gave us three exciting projects for our birthday: the Petition Check, a transparency database and a [parliamentwatch.org](http://parliamentwatch.org) App. The implementation of the projects runs at full speed.

We keep a finger on the pulse - together with you!



Gregor Hackmack



Boris Hekele

May 2015

# Ten Years parliamentwatch.org: 2004 -

## 2004: Project Start in Hamburg



The 8th of December 2004 is the starting signal for the new portal parliamentwatch.org. From now on, citizens in Hamburg can direct questions at their MPs publicly on the internet. In 2004, the new online dialogue starts for the parliament in Hamburg.

## 2005: Federal Parliament Elections & Grimme Online

A few months after the start in Hamburg, parliamentwatch.org is active on the federal level: Prior to the general election over 2.000 candidates can be asked online. The users ask more than 12.000 questions and receive almost 9.000 responses.

In the same year, parliamentwatch.org is nominated for the prestigious Grimme Online Award. We are in the final Top 30 of 1.400 proposals. In the end, Wikipedia, BildBlog and Spiegel Online, to name a few, win the award.

## 2006: Federal Parliament & State Parliament Elections

Two years after the online start in Hamburg, parliamentwatch.org is permanently available for the German federal parliament. In the first weeks, hundreds of citizens' questions are addressed to representatives in Berlin. For the first time, parliamentwatch.org also offers the question portal for state elections outside of Hamburg. By election day, voters in Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg and Saxony-Anhalt can draw a clear picture of their candidate's position. In summer, Berlin and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania follow.

## 2007: MP's Resignation

No answers to citizens' questions and even complete absence from many votes in the federal parliament: A tabloid newspaper refers to parliamentwatch.org and asks: Is von Bismarck the laziest MP in Germany? Carl-Eduard von Bismarck resigns several months later.



## 2008: Citizens' Questions stop larger Allowances

Plans for an increase in allowances are dropped after numerous critical questions by citizens via parliamentwatch.org. As a consequence many MPs reject the plan in public - apparently party leaders see no chances for a majority in parliament.



# 2014 in retrospect

## 2009: Super Election Year & Partner Projects

In the super election year 2009, parliamentwatch.org serves eleven elections in total, including the elections for the federal parliament and the EU parliament. For the first time, we, together with Spiegel Online, offer the Candidate-Check for the general elections.

Luxemburg and Ireland get transparency platforms: The portals politikercheck.lu and candidatewatch.ie are based on the model of parliamentwatch.org. People can direct question at their candidates for the EU elections online for the first time.

## 2010: Steinbrück's Secondary Employment

Former finance minister Peer Steinbrück (SPD) does not honour the federal parliament with his presence in 2010. He misses six of eleven votings; till then he did not hold even a single speech. However, he did hold numerous speeches outside of parliament: We listed 13 fee speeches. Our blog is the first medium to report on the issue, in turn starting a large public debate.



Foto: Peter Schmelzle / wikimedia / CC-BY-SA 3.0

## 2011: German Engagement Award

Parliamentwatch.org wins the audience prize of the German Engagement Award in 2011, hence being honored in the fields of transparency and public dialogue. The prize of 10.000 Euro is allocated for financing the communal projects of parliamentwatch.org.

## 2012: Transparency Rules & TV Talkshow



In the ZDF broadcast Maybrit Illner, Gregor Hackmack, co-founder of parliamentwatch.org, reaffirms his criticism of the insufficient transparency rules and demands a complete disclosure of MPs' extra earnings down on the last cent. By publishing a list of parliament's top earners, parliamentwatch.org starts a public debate concerning the secondary activities of MPs. As a consequence of the 'Case Steinbrück' the transparency rules for MPs are tightened.

## 2013: Dubious Secondary Activities Uncovered

Our research shows that the income of the CDU deputy faction leader Michael Fuchs comes from a private news agency in London, contrary to the statement on the federal parliament's website. On behalf of Fuchs, we receive a written warning concerning the article, numerous media use our research.

## 2014: Tightening Laws after Petition

Together with 50.835 citizens, we table the petition 'Punish bribery of MPs' and demand stricter rules against the corruption of MPs. The public pressure persuades the federal parliament to tighten the law. However, the new law still includes a glaring loophole. We keep up the pressure!

# The Year 2014. *An Overview*

## MPs' Extra Earnings



In July 2014, we uncover that at least 2.1 Million Euro of MPs' extra earnings comes from anonymous sources, and that one in four parliamentarians has at least one paid additional job. A political and media debate on disclosure rules and MPs' conflict of interest is the consequence of our research on extra earnings in our blog.

Amongst others, the Vice-President of the Federal Constitutional Court admonishes MPs to focus on their mandate.

## GRECO Evaluation

A GRECO delegation (Group of States against Corruption) invites us to Berlin in 2014. At the meeting, we draw the international corruption examiners' attention to abuses in Germany. The insufficient law against bribery of MPs and the much needed complete disclosure of all extra earnings are just a few issues that parliamentwatch.org, Lobbycontrol and Transparency International mention to the GRECO delegation. These issues are eventually also introduced to GRECO's audit report.

## Book: Demokratie einfach Machen (Democracy, just do it!)

In his book 'Demokratie einfach Machen – Ein Update für unsere Politik' (Democracy, just do it – An update for our politics) Gregor Hackmack, co-founder of parliamentwatch.org, with many examples and tips from his experience, shows how the renewal of democracy can succeed. By using the example of parliamentwatch.org, he describes the development from a small initiative to a widely utilized and respected organization.

## Lawsuit against the Federal Parliament

End of the year, we file a lawsuit against the federal parliament. We had asked the parliament to list all organizations whose representatives had received an access authorization which guarantees them permanent access to the parliament. The parliament refuses to disclose the information, despite our request according to the Freedom of Information Act. The trial is being scheduled for 2015.

## Debate on Democracy

To mark the 10th anniversary of parliamentwatch.org in December, Co-founder and democracy activist Gregor Hackmack and renown author and journalist Heribert Prantl (Süddeutsche Zeitung) debate on the future of democracy. In a passionate debate, both plead that democracy should evolve from an audience-centered to a participatory democracy. Instead of sitting back, citizens need to be active and get involved.

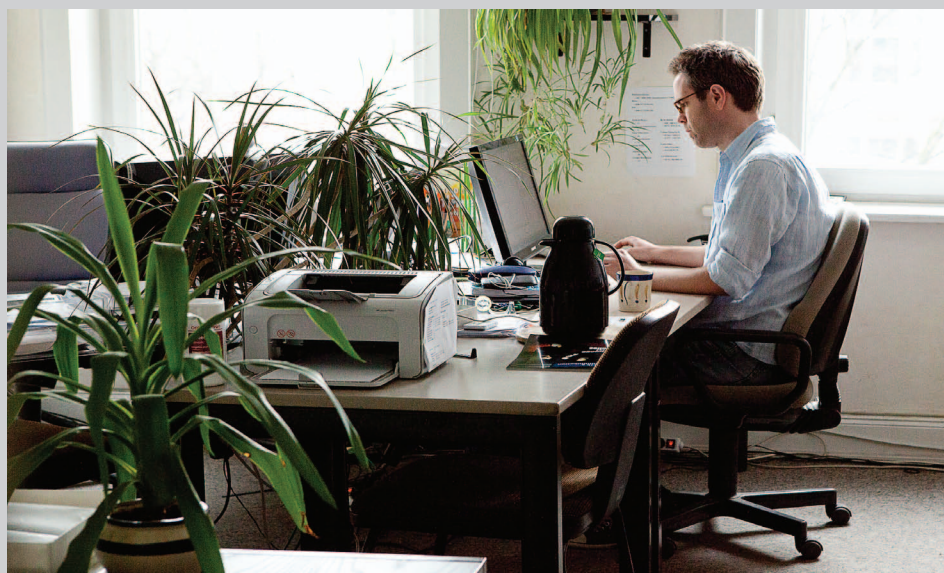


Heribert Prantl (Süddeutsche Zeitung)  
and Gregor Hackmack (parliamentwatch.org)





The Hamburg Office  
of parliamentwatch.org



Martin Reyher, Editor-in-Chief of  
parliamentwatch.org

"I support parliamentwatch.org because transparency, democratic control and citizens' participation are important guarantors of our liberty."

— Elke Meissner, donor

# Problem, Solution, *Effect*

## The Societal Problem

Whereas democracy as a form of government enjoys high approval ratings (90% are in favor according to a representative opinion poll by infratest dimap on 25th of February 2013), disenchantment with politics (and politicians) is rampant in Germany - 44% are not satisfied with the functioning of democracy. Many people feel powerless and unheard after the elections - They cannot see opportunities to contribute towards politics. Citizens and politicians are moving further and further apart, election turnout is falling, with fewer people willing to become involved in (party) politics.

## The parliamentwatch.org Approach

1. parliamentwatch.org is a web platform that bridges the increasingly widening gap between citizens and their representatives. parliamentwatch.org enables citizens to put public questions to their German or European MP, or to a representative of one of the (currently eleven) state parliaments in Germany. All questions and answers, as well as details of the voting behaviour, are permanently archived and will provide voters with excellent background information in subsequent elections. At the same time, parliamentwatch.org serves as a kind of verification function: since public feedback via the parliamentwatch.org platform is possible at any time, public statements must match the voting behaviour.

2. parliamentwatch.org documents and reports. The blog shows positive as well as negative examples. Furthermore, extra earnings, speeches and memberships in committees of every MP are documented, enabling every citizen (not only questioners) to assess their MPs. Partnerships with online media help parliamentwatch.org to reach a broader public and, hence, to maximise the effect.

3. Petitions. We underpin our work for more transparency in democracy with three concrete claims: tighter laws against corruption of MPs without any loopholes, prohibition of corporate donations for parties as well as a complete disclosure of MPs' extra earnings.

## Expected Effects

With its effects on voters, MPs and councillors, and the media (see graphic), parliamentwatch.org strives to increase participation in the political process and to make government more effective and citizen-friendly. The organization aims to increase voters' trust in politics and democracy – a passive democracy should become an active one.



Gregor Hackmack is a guest of major TV talk shows

# The Principle of *Operation*

## The Problem:

Many people are disenchanted with politics (and with politicians) and are turning away from politics. Decisions about their lives are made by others.

## Possible Causes:

### Strong lobbyism

- financially strong individual interests undermine democracy by influencing representatives behind closed doors (tag-words: additional income, party donations, the revolving door effect).

### Lack of transparency

- Voters frequently do not know who represents them and what these representatives actually do.

### Alienation

- Neither politicians nor citizens enter into direct contact with one another. They talk about but not with each other.

### As a result:

- There is no continuous exchange of information between citizens and politicians.
- The divide between citizens and politicians is widening constantly.
- Mistrust in politics is constantly increasing.



## Approach to a Solution:

### Public platform for asking questions

In a moderated forum, people can ask public questions and receive public answers. Citizens and representatives talk to each other directly.

### Voters' Archive

All questions and answers, voting behaviour, additional income, and any committee memberships are listed for all MPs and councillors.

### Transparency

We display the additional income of representatives on parliamentwatch.org. In our blog we create transparency focusing on party donations, research scandals around politicians and start debates on policy reforms around transparency, participation and anti-corruption measures.



## The Desired Effect

### On political decision-makers

- New forms of exchange with voters and amongst each other. Those who receive a question outside of their remit ask a colleague in their own party.
- Stronger pressure to be accountable to voters. Because the information is public, it is obvious who answers questions and who does not.

### On the media / political information

- Parliaments and MPs/councillors are more in the media's focus
- More comprehensive and more complete reporting on politics
- Biased media reports can be challenged immediately.

### On voters

- Simple and direct access to political information – more transparency
- Political representatives can be asked direct questions
- Ongoing opportunity to participate



## Effect on society

- More participation in the political process
- A more effective and citizen-friendly government
- More trust in politics and democracy
- A passive democracy becomes an active democracy

## Potential for Scaling the Project

parliamentwatch.org can be implemented for any number of parliaments. In Germany, the portal already covers the federal parliament, the German MEPs, eleven state parliaments, and twelve municipal councils. With growing donations and grants, we will be able to offer parliamentwatch.org for more state parliaments. In addition to this, we will continue existing campaigns or start new ones to increase the quality of transparency of and participation in German politics. Our main objectives in these campaigns are: the regulation of party donations, more transparency concerning extra earnings of politicians, as well as an efficient prosecution of bribery.

Projects running on the software developed by Parliamentwatch GmbH already exist in a number of other countries. parliamentwatch.org is offering to set up the software for international partner projects and to consult with them. International project partners are invited to join training sessions at the German offices of parliamentwatch.org in order to learn how to operate the software and a project like parliamentwatch.org. The software is open source and based on a drupal content management system. Projects can download and use the parliamentwatch.com software. A permanent presence and operation through foreign project partners has now been achieved in Luxembourg ([www.politikercheck.lu](http://www.politikercheck.lu)), Austria ([www.meinparlament.at](http://www.meinparlament.at)), Ireland ([www.dailwatch.ie](http://www.dailwatch.ie)), Tunisia ([www.meinparlament.at](http://www.meinparlament.at)), France ([www.questionnezvoselus.fr](http://www.questionnezvoselus.fr)) and Greece ([www.vouliwatch.gr](http://www.vouliwatch.gr)).

It has not yet been possible to transfer the German refinancing scheme – small recurring donations and generating a profit through premium profiles in the run-up to elections – to projects abroad. In Luxembourg and France, the partners fund the project with private money. In Austria, a news agency has taken over the project to fund it through its own means. In Ireland and France, the projects are run on a voluntary basis and in Tunisia the German Foreign Office provides support. Offering potential partners not only the software, but also a financing scheme that covers the project's operating costs permanently, therefore, remains the biggest challenge when extending the project to other countries.

## Ethical Integrity

parliamentwatch.org would like people to meet at an equal level and strives to facilitate mutually respectful communication. All questions – and all answers – are read by a team of moderators and checked for compliance with the code of conduct before being posted on the portal.

The following will, for example, not be posted:

- Contributions advocating tyranny, racism, sexism, and political and religious persecution, or which disparage or ridicule victims of the same
- Contributions containing insults, abusive or degrading language
- Questions on representatives' personal lives
- Questions that come under professional discretion
- Contributions which do not contain a question or a request to make a statement, but which are merely an expression of opinion
- Mass mailings
- Unreasonably large numbers of questions per enquirer or MP/councillor
- Multiple enquiries
- Questions by MPs/councillors' staff members in party or parliamentary party offices, and questions asked by the MP/councillor himself/herself
- Questions with false names and/or email addresses

MPs/councillors or candidates receive all questions and answers, even those that are not published. Anonymous questions are not forwarded. Adherence to the code is critical to the success of parliamentwatch.org and is monitored by a board of trustees.



The Members of the  
Board of Trustees:  
Angelika Gardiner,  
Frank Teichmüller,  
Manfred Brandt, Daniel  
Schily, Sigrid Meißner  
(from left to right)



Gregor Hackmack  
(3rd from left) receives  
the Democracy  
Award on behalf of  
parliamentwatch.org

Foto: NDI/Chan Chao

„I support parliamentwatch.org because the people always take  
precedence over the elected representatives, even in the  
years between elections (Karl Jaspers).“

— Dirk Dotzert, sponsor of parliamentwatch.org



# Our Effect in 2014

## Resources Used:

Staff costs, which include expenditure for external staff as well, account for the largest part of the resources used. Those costs become necessary to fulfil the organisation's purpose. Material costs contain expenditures of the association for technical assistance, the development and the maintaining of the website. These services are provided by the GmbH. The table contains the aggregated data of both organizations, Parliamentwatch GmbH and Parliamentwatch e.V. You can find a more detailed overview on page 21, the financial overview.

### Total resources used on the project:

in €	2014	2013	2012	2011
Staff costs	<b>308,472</b>	327,449	274,328	129,801
Material costs	<b>107,495</b>	157,356	155,276	158,444
Equipment*	<b>3,203</b>	2,280	2,059	2,278
Pro bono support (hours)**	<b>260</b>	385	335	355

\*) Book value excluding current assets at the end of the year.

\*\*) In 2014 these figures include 180 hours of voluntary work by private individuals and 80 hours of pro bono services provided by companies. Although the members of the board of curators also work on a voluntary basis, their support is not included in the figure for pro bono support. Most of the voluntary work is needed for researching communal elections and communal parliaments, as well as voluntary technical assistance. Pro Bono services provided by companies applied to legal services as well as management consulting.

## Achievements

In 2014, parliamentwatch.org served the European and three federal state elections (Thuringia, Saxony and Brandenburg) as well as the city council elections in Wuppertal (in turn offering the Candidate-Check for each election). Moreover, MPs from Brandenburg and Rhineland-Palatinate can be questioned since 2014. Altogether 12.576 questions were asked and 9.731 of them were answered during parliament and election projects. We did three campaigns with petitions, which were signed 21,199 times in total. The newsletter subscribers received 23 informational newsletters and 26 donation requests.

### parliamentwatch.org's achievements in figures

	31/12/14	31/12/13	31/12/12	31/12/11
Parliaments for which PW has been set up	<b>25</b>	71	62	35
Number of documented elections	<b>45</b>	40	35	29
Politicians	<b>35,869</b>	32,909	25,634	21,362
Newsletter subscribers	<b>56,743</b>	53,397	47,7321	32,233
Recurring donors	<b>1,722</b>	1,560	1,352	1,171

## Effect

parliamentwatch.org allows citizens direct participation through questioning their MPs. This freedom of information increases pressure on MPs to justify their actions to their voters. All questions and answers will be permanently stored in the digital voters' archive, where they are frequently used as an important research resource by journalists.

### The effect of parliamentwatch.org in figures

	31/12/14	31/12/13	31/12/12	31/12/11	31/12/10
Visitors per year	<b>1,473,198 *)</b>	2,583,668 *)	2,656,902 *)	2,980,207	2,621,163
Saved questions	<b>174,814</b>	162,238	141,907	125,456	106,134
Saved answers	<b>140,947</b>	131,216	114,517	101,971	86,530
Percentage of answered questions	<b>80,6</b>	80,9	80,7	81,3	81,5

\*) In the 4th quarter of 2012 we changed the visitors' analytics software. The new software counts less visitors than the old one, therefore a comparison to the preceding years is only possible with limitation.

## Effect on Voters

parliamentwatch.org increases the public's participation in the political process. In 2014, parliamentwatch.org counted about 1,5 million visits and almost 3,3 million page impressions. Especially blog and Candidate Check were frequently visited in the run-up to the elections of the state parliaments. Since the start of parliamentwatch.org, more than 175,000 questions were asked, out of which more than 140,000 have been answered so far.

For more than half of all visitors, parliamentwatch.org is the first contact with a politician. An online survey, polling 1,000 parliamentwatch.org visitors, found that 53% of the respondents had never made contact with a politician (at European, federal or state level) before they had heard of parliamentwatch.org. Extrapolated onto the almost 1,5 million visitors in 2014, this means that, this year alone, our portal managed to persuade more than 750,000 people to actively approach their political representatives for the first time.

## Effect on Political Decision-Makers

parliamentwatch.org brings representatives into contact with citizens. Citizens hold their representatives accountable by demanding verifiable and authentic answers to the questions asked. Representatives have answered more than 80 percent of all questions. We believe that this indicates that parliamentwatch.org is being taken seriously and that it motivates MPs to justify their actions to citizens. In 2014, this high rate of answers decreased slightly about 0.3 to 80.6%.

In parliament MPs frequently put questions to the government that are based on citizens' queries via parliamentwatch.org. A search of all the answers stored on parliamentwatch.org using the keywords "parlamentarische Anfrage" ["parliamentary question"] results in more than 300 hits.

## Effect on the Media / Political Information

parliamentwatch.org creates more comprehensive and complete coverage of politics: in 2013, parliamentwatch.org was embedded into the web portals of spiegel.de, t-online.de, sueddeutsche.de, and approximately 50 regional newspaper portals. In the run-up to elections, when the public's interest in politics increases, media partners serve as important crowd-pullers for parliamentwatch.org. An online survey carried out regularly by us revealed that just over

a third of all visitors became aware of parliamentwatch.org through media partners. The number of people becoming aware of parliamentwatch.org through social media is also increasing.

Our blog has become an important research source for journalists. Our research on extra earnings of members of the federal parliament, originating to one third from anonymous sources (at least 2,1 Mio Euro), started a public discussion in the summer of 2014. MPs with exceedingly high incomes were criticized, even within their own political parties. A Constitutional Court judge reminded some top earners not to exaggerate.

Moreover, parliamentwatch.org's research on access authorizations for lobbyists, granting them permanent access to the federal parliament, lead to a lawsuit against the federal parliament. Since the federal administration refused to publish a list of lobby organisations that received access authorizations, Parlamentwatch e.V. filed a suit in November 2014.

Looking at our partner projects in Ireland, Austria, Luxemburg, France and Tunisia, it becomes evident that parliamentwatch.org's approach works beyond Germany. In 2014, vouliwatch.gr in Greece could be introduced to the parliamentwatch.org network as its newest member.

## Evaluation and experiences

Resources, achievements and effects of the organization are discussed in weekly team conferences and evaluated in monthly reports including database evaluations. The quality of our moderation is ensured through continuous training, the evaluation of complaints against moderation decisions, an annual meeting of moderators as well as regular sessions of the board of curators. A new budget plan is developed each year for the four years to come, including next to financial figures also milestones and intended effects of parliamentwatch.org. Each month we evaluate to what extent the desired goals have been achieved, and we further analyse deviations to adapt the execution of projects accordingly. An important experience was to learn that foreign projects have insufficient relevance in terms of visitors and questions/answers and that sustainable funding could not be achieved so far. Therefore, we have decided to limit our resources applied abroad. Our blog, however, has continuously increased its reach and thus adds considerably to the impact of parliamentwatch.org. Campaigns combined with petitions increase the number of newsletter recipients and thus the number of potential donors.

# Organisation *and Intention*

## Organisation

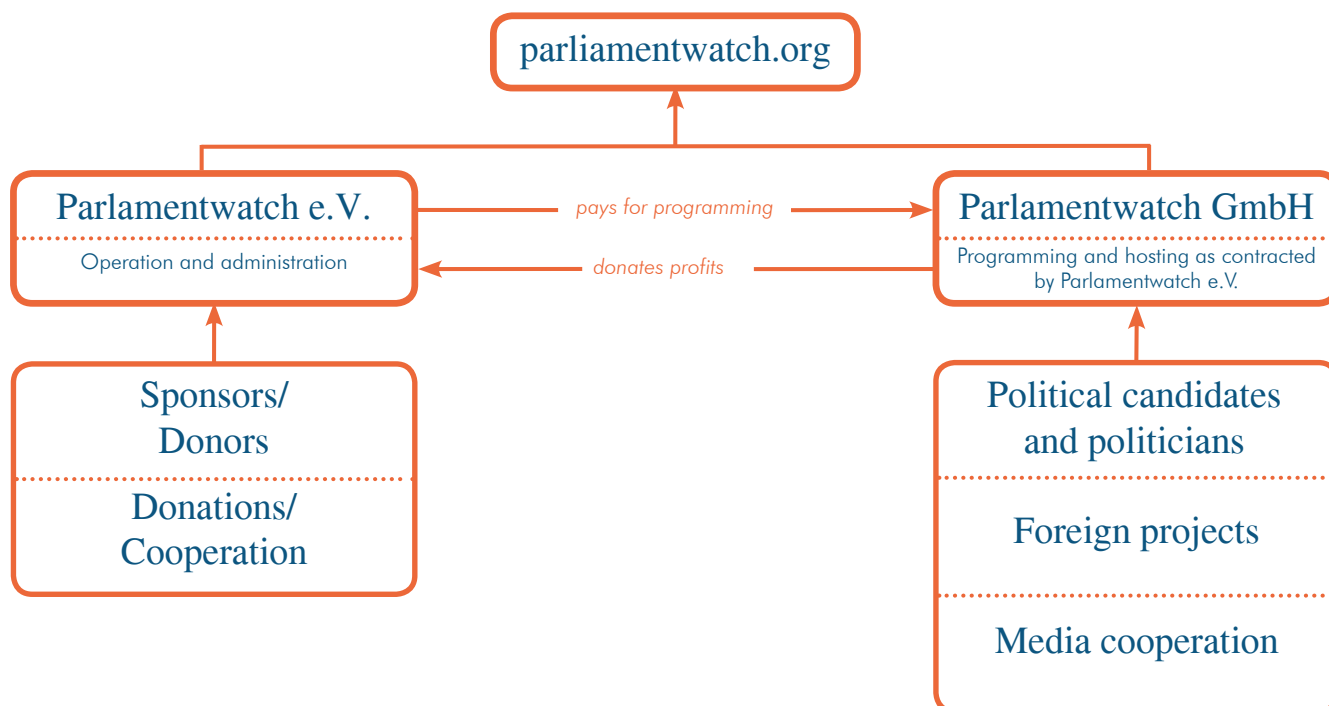
parliamentwatch.org went online as a voluntary initiative by its two founders, Gregor Hackmack and Boris Hekele, in Hamburg on 8th of December 2004. Just five months later, parliamentwatch.org was nominated for the Grimme Online Award, a prestigious prize for Internet projects. However, it quickly became apparent that it would not be possible to expand the project to cover the general elections on a voluntary basis. The work was, therefore, put on a more professional footing. Currently (as per: 31st of December 2014), ten permanent employees (6,5 full-time equivalents), 27 freelancers, and 15 voluntary staff, curators, and advisors as well as two providers of the federal volunteer service ensure that parliamentwatch.org runs smoothly. In the medium to long term, the costs associated with the project are to be funded by a wider net of recurring donors. Prior to elections, we also ask candidates for a one-time contribution to project costs in return for a premium profile. This amount is currently 149 € for state elections, and 179 € for federal or European elections.

In order to enable this type of mixed financing, we established a non-profit organisation, Parlamentwatch e.V., and a limited company, Parlamentwatch GmbH. The association acts as the sponsor of parliamentwatch.org and handles the editorial side of the project. The association's non-partisanship is guaranteed by a board of curators. Parlamentwatch e.V. is funded through recurring and one-off donations. The association is registered at the Hamburg district court and, because of its advancement of the democratic polity, is recognised as charitable. All donations are tax-deductible in Germany.

Parlamentwatch GmbH is the association's technical service provider, developing the Internet platform and making it available to the association and the international partner projects. In addition, the GmbH can provide chargeable services, such as selling premium profiles to candidates or developing tools for media partners, which reduces the cost of operating parliamentwatch.org.

Parlamentwatch GmbH was pre-financed by BonVenture in Munich, a German social venture capital fund. The shares in the limited company are held by the two founders, Gregor Hackmack and Boris Hekele (42.5% each) and BonVenture (15%). Should Parlamentwatch GmbH generate any profits after having paid back the loan, its articles of association stipulate that these must be donated. This obligation means that Parlamentwatch GmbH shares will never have a material value that exceeds their nominal value. To prevent BonVenture receiving nothing after the loan is repaid, Parlamentwatch GmbH has undertaken to donate 20% of any profits to BonVenture's charitable division, BonVenture gGmbH. Since all profits must be donated either way, this undertaking was not difficult to make for the two founders. As stipulated in the GmbH agreement, the other beneficiaries of any surpluses are the association Parlamentwatch e.V. (70%), and the cooperation partners Mehr Demokratie e.V. and Mehr Bürgerrechte e.V. (5% each).

## Organisational Structure



## Founders' Portraits in Brief

### Gregor Hackmack

Gregor Hackmack, born in 1977, established parliamentwatch.org jointly with Boris Hekele in 2004. This was preceded by a successful referendum to change the electoral law in Hamburg to give citizens more say in choosing their political representatives. Gregor holds a B.A. in International Relations from the London School of Economics and a Masters in Political Sociology. In 2008, he was made an Ashoka Fellow in recognition of his position as a leading social entrepreneur, and, in 2010, he was admitted to the Schwab Foundation's Young Global Leader Network. Gregor is one of the initiators of the new transparency law in Hamburg and was elected to the plenary of the Chamber of Commerce in Hamburg in 2014. His first book "Demokratie einfach machen - Ein Update für unsere Politik" ("Democracy just do it - An update for our politics") was published in April 2014. He is responsible for project development, networking, and the international dissemination of parliamentwatch.org. Since October 2014, he has also been the head of the petition portal Change.org in Germany.

### Boris Hekele

Boris Hekele, born in 1978, studied philosophy and media informatics, and has focused intensively on web technologies since 1998. He designs and plans extensive web applications and is working on new ways to enable people to participate in decision-making processes via the Internet. Together with Gregor Hackmack, he set up parliamentwatch.org in 2004, expanding it in subsequent years. Within the team, Boris Hekele is responsible for conceptual design and project development. He manages and coordinates the organisation's development and technical team. He is an open source and open data enthusiast and would like the platform to be so open, that everyone could participate directly in its further development. He has been nominated for the Grimme Online Award twice, in 2005 and 2007. He is running the Berlin office that was opened in 2013.

# Ecological and Societal *Profile*

Parlamentwatch GmbH and Parlamentwatch e.V. are oriented towards the common good, according to their statutes: With more participation and transparency in politics we want to achieve a self-determined society. However, a self-determined society is only a single part of the common good. Each organization, to a greater or lesser extent, has an impact on the common good. This impact strongly depends on the organization's attitude towards the natural environment as well as the way the organization treats its employees and customers. With the following information on the environmental and societal profile, we would like to give an overview of our contribution to the common good. In doing so, we follow the Common Good Balance Sheet of the Movement of Economy for the Common Good. (Link: [www.ecogood.org](http://www.ecogood.org))

The Economy for the Common Good developed the common good balance sheet as a uniform reporting standard. Five universal values – human dignity, cooperation, sustainability, justice and democracy – are applied on the stakeholders, namely suppliers, investors, employees and business owners, customers and society as a whole. The 17 indicators are evaluated by scores; the total score should have an influence on, amongst others, tax rates and interest rates. As a result, the more the organization contributes to the common good, the greater are its benefits.

<sup>1</sup> [www.ecogood.org](http://www.ecogood.org) "Gemeinwohlökonomie - Ein Wirtschaftsmodell mit Zukunft"

## Beitrag zum Gemeinwohl

**Suppliers:** parliamentwatch.org uses green energy in the offices in Berlin and Hamburg. In the sector e-mailing, we cooperate with posteo.de, that operates the server with green energy and made its mark in the field of data security. The website parliamentwatch.org is operated on the servers of manitu.de, an environmentally and socially orientated web hosting provider. We mainly buy organic food for the employees' kitchen, but do not use recycled paper everywhere.

**Investor:** We chose the ethical and ecological GLS-Bank as our principle bank. BonVenture, which only funds social enterprises, provided us with a loan for start-up financing.

**Employees and Business Owner:** parliamentwatch.org offers every employee part-time positions and flexible working hours, which are organized through self-responsibility and agreements within the team. Overtime can be reduced promptly with leisure time. Moreover, there is a social budget for team activities. Employees of parliamentwatch.org have a sustainable lifestyle and ecological behavior is supported, for example through monthly tickets for public transport. Men and women draw the same salary for the same work. The income disparity is 1:2,2 (incl. Trainee position) or 1:1,2 (without trainee position). The business owners do not receive any profits. Parliamentwatch.org can be regarded as exemplary with respect to transparency and corporate democracy: Fundamental issues are discussed and decided upon during weekly team sessions and half-yearly team meetings.

**Clients:** The webpage parliamentwatch.org is the main product. It is free of charge and can be used by everybody who has a connection to the internet. By using servers of the ecologically and socially aligned webhosting- supplier manitu, the product becomes a sustainable dimension. We pay attention to barrier-free programming and engage professional associations to test usability of the platform and its applications. We cooperate with providers of transparency portals from all over the world. Moreover, we are a member of the Parliamentary Monitoring Network and make our source code publicly available as an open source. Information about politicians and their work in parliaments become transparent, freely available and easily accessible through our blog. Many data are retrievable via a free, automatic data interface (API).

**Society:** As a societal company, parliamentwatch.org is focused on its contribution to the common good. We act in transparent manner towards the community and the publication of our annual report goes beyond legal requirements. We are a member of the Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft (Initiative Transparent Civil Society). Furthermore, the GmbH undergoes a voluntary audit every year.





The parliamentwatch.org Team

„I support parliamentwatch.org because I don't think simply voting for people every four years is enough. I want them to feel supported by critical and attentive encouragement.“

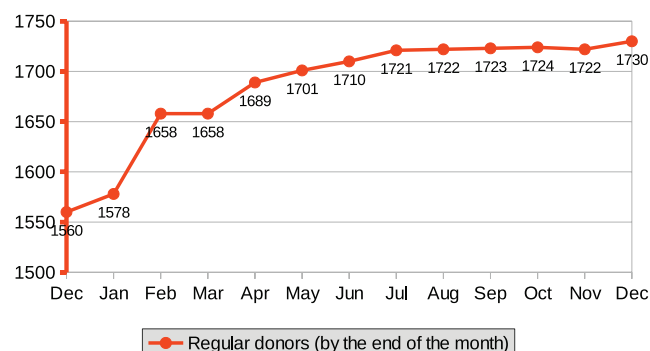
— Christian Waegele, parliamentwatch.org sponsor

# Financial Overview I

Both organizations involved in the provision of parliamentwatch.org publish annual accounts at the end of every business year. The audited annual financial statement, prepared in accordance with commercial law, for Parlamentwatch GmbH and the statement on excess of receipts over expenses plus capital account for Parlamentwatch e.V. for the year 2014 are available online. Both organizations use double-entry accounting, with the GmbH drawing up a balance sheet and the association presenting a statement on excess of receipts over expenses. Both book-keeping and auditing are performed by third parties. Internal controlling is the responsibility of our employee Fabian Hanneforth. The excerpt from the annual accounts presented here provides a quick overview of the financial situation. Parlamentwatch GmbH performs setup and technical maintenance services for parliamentwatch.org and bills the association, which is responsible for maintaining the content. This relationship accounts for the majority of the association's expenditure under Technology and Development and the limited company's earnings under Site Programming, Media Partner.

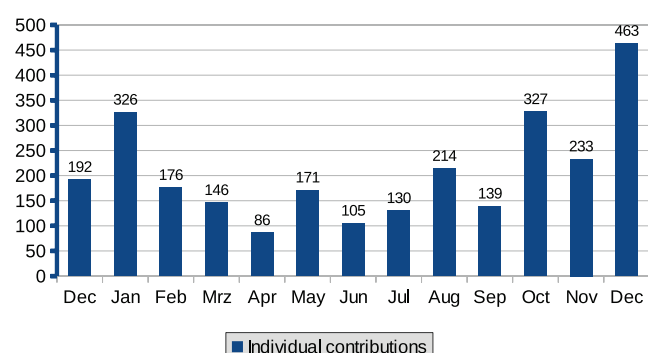
## Sustainable Funding

Continuity is a key objective of parliamentwatch.org, with the public questions and answers remaining accessible to citizens for a long time to come. For this reason, sustainable funding is of paramount importance. In 2014, a loss of 3,900 Euro was reported. Due to the surplus in 2013 however, the loan of 64,000 Euro, obtained during the initial period of parliamentwatch.org, could be repaid as planned. The remaining balance is 66,200 Euro. Hence, almost 78 % of the initial loan sum of 306,200 Euro has been repaid. The budget for 2015 aims at Parlamentwatch GmbH gaining 60,000 Euro in order to repay the debt- A milestone in the (financial) development of the non-profit organisation.



## Donations and Sponsors

The independence of parliamentwatch.org is guaranteed by its 1,722 recurring donors and 2,516 individual donations in 2014, which amounted to 62% of the project's total revenue. The remaining 38% come from donations made by foundations (OLIN gGmbH, Körberstiftung, Sparda Bank Hamburg, GLS Treuhand, GTS Hamburg, 15%), premium profiles (3%) as well as international and corporate projects (12%) and other income (8%). If any of the latter were to drop out, the continued existence of parliamentwatch.org would not be threatened. The sponsors thus ensure the independence of parliamentwatch.org. The following graphic illustrates the trend in the number of sponsors and donors.



# Financial Overview II

## Income Parlamentwatch GmbH

in €	2014	2013	2012
Premium Profiles	14,988	57,398	12,492
Site programming, media partners	87,729	131,809	87,987
Foreign projects	59,506	46,900	56,300
Advertising	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>162,223</b>	236,107	156,783

## Income Parlamentwatch e.V.

in €	2014	2013	2012
Contributions, donations	301,380	265,383	196,835
Donations from foundations	54,800	85,750	115,500
Donations from cooperations	15,850	17,260	6,252
<b>Total</b>	<b>372,030</b>	368,393	318,587

## Expenditure Parlamentwatch GmbH

in €	2014	2013	2012
Salaries	103,367	87,790	74,331
Server costs	9,193	9,141	7,344
Office costs, misc.	49,266	37,322	18,899
Interest	4,318	6,688	11,749
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,144</b>	140,941	112,324

## Expenditure Parlamentwatch e.V.

in€	2014	2013	2012
Salaries	153,212	115,122	80,806
Freelance staff	41,271	111,954	119,191
Office costs, misc.	50,038	27,548	26,436
Technology and development	60,250	89,240	90,847
<b>Total</b>	<b>304,771</b>	343,864	317,280

## Financial Situation of Parlamentwatch GmbH

As of 31st of December 2014, Parlamentwatch GmbH had liabilities amounting to 73,570 Euro, consisting mainly of a loan from shareholder BonVenture with an outstanding balance of 66,200 Euro. After offsetting the losses from the previous years (totaling 15,829 Euro) with the annual surplus and the subscribed shareholders' capital (totaling 25.000 Euro), a positive equity of 5,271 Euro remains. Fixed assets of the GmbH (mainly office equipment) amount to 1,225 Euro; there is now a bank deposit of 17,469 Euro. The surplus amounts to an unusual positive annual surplus of 96,062 Euro due to the federal elections. After the deficit in 2014 we estimate a more positive outcome for 2015.

## Financial Situation of Parlamentwatch e.V.

Parlamentwatch e.V. was able to increase its income out of recurring and one-off donations by 14%, after an increase of 35% in the year before. Monetary donations from foundations sank compared to 2013 by 26%. The staff costs increased through the employment of a fundraising manager. The staff expenditures increased because of a newly established position for a technician as well as the fixed employment of the moderation manager. The employment of fixed staff decreased the costs for freelance staff. Moreover, there is less demand for programming regarding the relaunch. On the 31st of December 2014, the association had fixed assets (office equipment) of 1,978 Euro. The amount of cash and bank accounts together added up to 107,444 Euro. There are no liabilities. In total a surplus of 67,259 Euro could be achieved, for 2015 we expect a deficit of about 2,000 Euro.



# Our Team

## Parliamentwatch.org Board:

Boris Hekele co-founder

Gregor Hackmack co-founder

## Permanent staff members:

David Bruhn accounting, moderation management

Roman Ebener elections and parliaments

Fabian Hanneforth controlling

Nicolas Koch federal volunteer service

Mathias Rakow editor and research

Martin Reyher editor-in-chief

Frederik Röse fundraising

Christopher Witte server administration

Veronika Ziegelmeier federal volunteer service

## Freelance staff:

Ann-Kristin Block interface design

Marie Berg moderation

Ole Borgard moderation

Jessica Burmester moderation

Samuel Decker moderation

Lisa Etzold moderation

Keno Franke moderation

Stefan Freudenberg consulting

Tina Gärtner moderation

Ruth Geisenfelder frontend development

Kerstin Grözinger moderation

Laura Herzog moderation

Kai Hildebrandt backend development

Jan Dirk Hoffmann moderation

Simon Kopischke moderation

Moritz Küster moderation

Mareike Müller moderation

Lilly Murmann moderation

Yildiz Massad-Sünneli API development

Alexander Schoeden backend development

Jan Schwalbach moderation

Sarah Sinnreich moderation

Simon Wallisch moderation

André Wellhäußer moderation

## Volunteers:

Dr. Kristian Klosterkemper consulting service

## Parlamentwatch e.V. Board of Trustees (voluntary)

Dr. Manfred Brandt chairman

Prof. Hark Bohm

Angelika Gardiner

Dr. Wilfried Maier

Sigrid Meißner

Daniel Schily

Frank Teichmüller

Dr. Philipp-Christian Wachs

## Parlamentwatch GmbH Advisory Board (voluntary)

Dorothee Vogt chairwoman

Dirk Ahlers

Susanne Möks-Carone

Alexander Szlovak

Frank Teichmüller

Birgit Radow (withdrawal 2014)

## Fotographs

Ann-Kristin Block / [www.elska.de](http://www.elska.de)

Maria Feck / [www.mariafeck.de](http://www.mariafeck.de)

All information is correct as of 31st Dec 2014

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## Site Notice

### Parlamentwatch e.V.

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20148 Hamburg/Germany

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Fax: +49 (0)40 317 69 10 - 28

E-Mail: [info@parliamentwatch.org](mailto:info@parliamentwatch.org)

Tax number:

17/450/06236

Registered with the

Hamburg District Court

VR 19479

Authorised representatives:

Boris Hekele and

Gregor Hackmack

Executive board:

Gregor Hackmack and

Boris Hekele

### Parlamentwatch GmbH

Mittelweg 12

20148 Hamburg/Germany

Tel.: +49 (0)40 317 69 10 - 26

Fax: +49 (0)40 317 69 10 - 28

HRB - 98928

Hamburg District Court

VAT no: DE

253099897

Account for donations::

A/c No: 2011 120 000

Sort code: 430 609 67

GLS Bank

IBAN: E03430609672011120000

BIC: GENODEM1GLS

# Support

More than 1,800 people guarantee the independence and non-partisanship of parliamentwatch.org by making regular donations. Please take a stand for openness and participation in politics and support our parliamentwatch.org.

Just use this form.

Thank you very much!

## I would like to support parliamentwatch.org

### One-time donation

in the amount of:

- ☐ 10 Euro  
☐ 20 Euro  
☐ 50 Euro  
☐ ..... Euro

### Monthly donation

in the amount of:

- ☐ 5 Euro  
☐ 10 Euro  
☐ 25 Euro  
☐ ..... Euro

I would like my donation to be used to support the following project:

☐ Your state, municipality, etc: ..... or ☐ Overall project

Titel: ☐ Mr ☐ Ms ☐ Company

First name: ..... Last name: .....

Address: ..... Postcode/Town: .....

Tel.: ..... E-mail: .....

Year of birth: .....

☐ **SEPA Direct debit mandate**  
(revocable at any time – saves admin costs):  
Creditor Identifier ID: DE76PWS00001022436  
Please debit my account with the sum indicated above:

☐ I will remit the sum to:  
Parlamentwatch e.V.  
A/c no: 2011 120 000  
Sort code: 430 609 67 (GLS Bank)  
IBAN: E03430609672011120000  
BIC: GENODEM1GLS

Account holder: .....

IBAN: .....

Bank: ..... BIC: .....

The direct debit will be executed from my bank account (required if making a monthly donation):

☐ Annually ☐ Half-yearly ☐ Every quarter ☐ Monthly

☐ Yes, I do need a donation receipt in the spring of the following year.

☐ Yes, I want to have my name and donation mentioned on parliamentwatch.org.

.....  
Place and date

.....  
Signature





The printing of this report was made possible by the generous support of the non-profit Association "Social Reporting Initiative" with funding provided by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).