

Democracy and the Legitimization to Tax

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Preface

In 2024, I had the honor of organizing the annual conference of the Group for Research on European and International Taxation (GREIT), hosted at the University of Vienna. This volume brings together the contributions presented at the 18th GREIT Conference on "Democracy and the Legitimization to Tax" held in Vienna on 23 and 24 September 2024.

The central theme of the conference was to explore the traditional linkage between democratic participation and the levying of taxes in the context of today's increasingly globalized and digitalized world. In such a world, national borders are becoming less significant. Citizens often live in countries different from those in which they were born, and their place of residence may not align with their place of employment. Consequently, individuals may belong to multiple communities, which challenges the traditional relationship between citizens and the state. This evolving, multilayered community structure places significant pressure on conventional understandings of the state, its functions, and how it is financed.

The same applies to the corporate world. Multinational enterprises operate wherever labour and resources are most cost-effective, regardless of where their customers are based. Benefiting from favourable tax regimes in certain jurisdictions, many companies can essentially choose where to be taxed.

Against this backdrop, the first part of this volume is dedicated to the question of *how and to what extent legality of taxation is linked to the representation of the people.*

In Part I, András Jakab examines the evolving concept of democracy, emphasizing that modern democracy is fundamentally rooted in political accountability — particularly in the electorate's power to re-elect or reject their representatives. Céline Braumann explores how the work of international organizations shapes our understanding of democracy, analyzing the ways in which democratic principles feature — legally or practically — in the interactions between these organizations and domestic governance structures. Saïda El Boudouhi and Polina Kouraleva-Cazals turn to the democratic legitimacy of the international tax law-making process. Their contribution focuses on the critical role of national parliaments as a safeguard of legitimacy. Yet, they argue that recent developments have increasingly constrained this role, thereby weakening democratic oversight. Christina Dimitropoulou continues this discussion by analyzing the United Nations' initiative for a Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation