

Mirjam Künkler and Tine Stein

## **Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde - Constitutional Scholar and Judge at the German Federal Constitutional Court**

The lecture will review Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde's tenure on the German Federal Constitutional Court. Böckenförde (1930-2019) was one of Europe's leading constitutional theorists and historians whose profile as a Catholic, a Social Democrat and a political Liberal made him a highly unusual thinker. At the Federal Constitutional Court, he served on the second senate, which is chiefly responsible for issues regarding state organization, such as institutional conflicts between different branches of government, including issues of European integration. To a lesser extent, the second senate also reviews some constitutional complaints and concrete review cases. Böckenförde's tenure lasted from 1983 to 1996, thus stretching the crucial years of German reunification in 1990 which saw the unification and harmonisation of a number of laws between East and West. Into his term fall important decisions regarding the deployment of missiles, the law on political parties and party financing, the regulation of abortion, and the process of European integration. The lecture will give an overview of some of the decisions he contributed to as well as his influential dissenting opinions, of which he authored 11, one of the highest number in the court's history. The lecture will further shed light on his views regarding the proper role of the constitutional court against the background of the Basic Law and approaches to constitutional interpretation.