

Germany. Anecdotally, one of the authors of this textbook recently took some of his students on a study abroad program to Germany, and representatives of the Bavarian state executive branch made several of these direct comparisons during a presentation. Similar sentiments were expressed by representatives of the Hessen state government in their capital city of Weisbaden and by a university professor at the University of Leipzig.

Unlike the United States, including Texas, where state organization and election of the executive branch differs significantly from the national government, all German states possess a state government structure that mirrors the structure of the national government. In Bavaria, the state government is a parliamentary system in which voters directly elect the state's Landtag. The members of the Landtag choose the minister-president and cabinet. These people typically come from the largest political party in the Landtag. The minister-president and cabinet serve as the executive branch and supervise the various departments and agencies of the state government.

The German state government is organized into ten different departments. Each department has an area of responsibility over particular policies and activities of the state government. Some of these departments are unsurprising, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, which supervises the state's school system. The Ministry of Finance corresponds to the Comptroller of

Public Accounts in Texas. The Ministry of the Interior combines activities of state police, fire protection, and disaster preparedness. Some of the departments reflect combinations of activities that Texans may find odd, such as the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Family, and Women. Others are unique to the German political system, such as the Ministry of Federal and European Affairs. This department manages relations with the German national government in Berlin. Because Germany is one of the twenty-seven members of the European Union, the department also manages Bavaria's interactions with that organization's institutions.

THINKING *Critically*

- ★ What advantage does Germany possess by having all state governments mirror the structure of the national government?
- ★ What advantages exist to the U.S. approach, in which states may vary the selection of their executive branches?
- ★ What ministries of the Bavarian government are most interesting to you? Why?
- ★ If you were to create a state government agency in Texas that most reflected something uniquely Texas, what would the agency be?