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**LISBOAN**

**Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network**

**“Lisbon Watch” Annual Report, Issue 1**

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## Introduction

This is the first issue of the “Lisbon Watch”, an annual report mapping the state of the art of and progress on research and teaching regarding the new legal foundations of the European Union: the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), referred to as “Lisbon Treaty” in short. As integral part of the LISBOAN<sup>1</sup> project, the Lisbon Watch offers a unique multi-disciplinary perspective on the Lisbon Treaty’s impact on integration studies.

37 LISBOAN member institutes from 27 countries have answered an open questionnaire which was distributed in December 2010. The contributions cover activities at the respondents’ own institutes, but also address research efforts and political debates in each country as a whole. While the focus is on the period of autumn 2010 - spring 2011, developments around the coming into force of the LT in December 2009 are also included whenever applicable.

Following the structure of the questionnaire, the report is divided into four parts. Parts one and two cover the teaching and research activities at each contributing institution. This pertains both to EU studies in general and the Lisbon Treaty in particular. Part three deals with the debate on the Treaty of Lisbon in the respective country. Finally, part four provides the contributor’s personal assessment of topical issues linked to the EU’s new legal foundation. Have there been remarkable/counterintuitive developments following the Treaty’s coming into force? What challenges will the EU have to face in the short term, and does the Lisbon Treaty offer a better framework to cope with these challenges? In which areas are pressures for continued treaty reform likely to emerge?

The Lisbon Watch is produced annually over the full life span of the LISBOAN project from 2010-2013. All contributions are synthesised by the project management team at the University of Cologne, Germany. Contact persons are Tobias Kunstein (tobias.kunstein(at)uni-koeln.de) and Johannes Müller-Gomez (johannes.mueller-gomez(at)uni-koeln.de). Building on experiences from the preparation of this first issue, the questionnaire as well as the production process will be reviewed and possibly adapted. Feedback is therefore welcome.

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<sup>1</sup> LISBOAN (Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network) is a network of 67 partner institutions from all EU member states as well as Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. Its aim is to strengthen cooperation between institutions of higher education and research in Europe with a view to teaching and researching the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union’s legal foundation since December 2009. LISBOAN is funded under the European Union’s Lifelong Learning Programme, contract 177316-LLP-1-2010-1-DE-ERASMUS-ENWA, from October 2010 - September 2013. See [www.lisboan.net](http://www.lisboan.net) for more information.

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## Executive Summary

The first mapping of teaching activities at LISBOAN institutes has revealed a number of noteworthy features. Part one of the report shows that, quite unsurprisingly, the Lisbon Treaty plays an important role in teaching EU studies. While no partner institution actually dedicated a full course to the document, it was the basis for at least a number of sessions in most EU-related courses. Teaching material was routinely updated in order to take into account the new legal framework. Interestingly, no contribution explicitly mentioned the transitional periods which apply to a number of changes from Nice to Lisbon. This seems to indicate that both the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ rules still are of equal importance in the partners’ teaching of EU studies. Had the Lisbon rules already fully replaced Nice as the basis of teaching, these transitional exceptions would most probably have been referred to.

Almost all institutes supplemented their regular course programme with extracurricular activities, including (public) guest lectures, press conferences and roundtables. In a few cases, these events were also further disseminated using radio and TV (radio by a Bulgarian and a Spanish partner, television by a Swedish partner).

Turning to teaching methods, the contributions clearly show that “classical” forms of teaching, that is classroom-style seminars, are still prevalent as far as EU studies in general and the Lisbon Treaty in particular are concerned. However, this proposition needs to be qualified in two ways: Firstly, seven institutions report the organization of simulation exercises or moot courts. Secondly, although PowerPoint presentations have been hardly mentioned in the report, this can probably be attributed to the fact that they have become so common. It is, however, somewhat surprising that relatively new systems which allow the combination of electronic presentations and notes written on special paper or a tablet PC are reportedly used in a single case only. In terms of innovative teaching in the area of EU studies, there clearly is a need for spreading such methods; a task which the LISBOAN network is well-placed to tackle.

Interestingly, continuing and professional education play a role not only for those LISBOAN partners which, as training institutions, are explicitly dedicated to this area (European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht, European Institute in Romania and also a number of research-focused institutes). Several universities (six in total) also reported to offer such courses in the reporting period.

Part two of the report deals with research activities of LISBOAN institutes. Their main areas of EU-related research are as diverse as the European Union itself. A slight emphasis on external aspects is observable, but topics also include democracy, European Neighbourhood policy, the institutional architecture and theoretical approaches to EU integration, to name just a few.

When asked which Lisbon Treaty innovations were of special interest to them, respondents most frequently mentioned the EU’s external action in general and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as well as the European External Action Service in particular (20% of all responses, multiple answers permitted). Governance and the inter-institutional balance post Lisbon also attracted above-average attention (13%), as did the role of national parliaments against the background of subsidiarity (11%) and the reforms concerning Council and European Council presidencies (9%). Two additional institutional innovations that were mentioned several times are the solidarity clause and the citizens’ initiative. As far as specific policies are concerned and apart from external action, energy policy seems to be a relatively salient topic.

The vast majority of institutes participating in the Lisbon Watch have already produced publications on Lisbon innovations, including articles in leading academic journals such as the Journal of Common

Market Studies or the Journal of European Law. A number of monographs has also been published which focus exclusively on the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

Part three of the Lisbon Watch analyses the Lisbon Treaty from a national perspective. The contributors focus on the academic debate in their country since the treaty's coming into force in December 2009, and link its innovations to topical issues that have been discussed in their respective political arena.

Corresponding to the long and tenacious process of redrafting the EU's primary law, ratification proved difficult in several countries. Although, in general, parliamentary votes showed stable majorities in favour of the new treaty (for example in Hungary, Italy or Sweden), frequent calls for public referenda also reflected deep cleavages between political parties. Austria and Germany are showcases of sporadic but sustained opposition that the Lisbon Treaty has been met with, including constitutional complaints.

The intensity of the public debate and media coverage also varied markedly between countries. For instance, discussions on the sovereign debt crisis caused strong criticism of treaty provisions (or rather, non-compliance with them) in some countries. In contrast, in Ireland, Greece and Portugal, economic difficulties seem to have blocked out any major debate on the Lisbon Treaty. In this respect it is interesting to see that in Luxembourg, the country with the highest per-capita income of the EU, the notion of 'transfer union' is avoided and the bail-out of those countries is not criticized as much as, for instance, in Germany.

Two other topical policy debates of the reporting period, namely immigration policy and energy policy, have been cited only infrequently as being linked to the Lisbon treaty. The former was mentioned in contributions from Denmark, Italy, Spain and Sweden; the latter in Hungary, Romania and Spain.

In part four, contributors optionally provide their personal assessment of Lisbon innovations and their past, present and future impact on policy debates. Overall, it is fair to say that the debate on the Lisbon Treaty has remained a national one. It is difficult to identify any overarching issues that can be characterized as defining a European perspective on the Lisbon Treaty. Obviously, the absence of a cross-border debate on the Lisbon Treaty is rooted in the persistently large differences between individual (member) states. Indeed, recent elections and court rulings indicate that the 'period of reflection', announced by the European Council in 2005 after the failure of the Constitutional treaty, has spawned a new treaty but failed to breathe new life into the process of European integration. The changes introduced are relatively modest and technical when compared to the seminal treaty revisions of the Maastricht Treaty or the Single European Act, and initial enthusiasm seems to have evaporated.

It is certainly too early to stick the label of "irrelevance" to the Lisbon Treaty, in a sense that "Lisbon leftovers" will be resolved by a new treaty in two or three years time. However, the fragmented debate underlines that there is a need to streamline research across borders and disciplines and to focus more on explaining the current and ever more complex legal framework of the EU to its citizens.

Finally, from a perspective of academic self-discipline, it is important to keep in mind that while legal texts such as the Lisbon Treaty certainly are a rewarding object of scientific interest, they are written by policy makers. Therefore, and notwithstanding all the valuable insights the Lisbon Treaty promises, its content should not be taken as the sole determinant of the academic agenda.