

Working Group Teaching Lisbon

Additional Working Group

Agenda

Thursday 10th May 2012

14.00 – 15.30 h

Fondation Universitaire, Rue d'Egmont 11

Salle Willems

“Teaching the Lisbon Treaty: perspectives from different disciplines”

Outline:

Based on discussions at the first LISBOAN annual conference mirrored also in the report of the project's internal evaluators, and following an initiative by Prof. Eugene Eteris, the Steering Committee has decided to establish an additional Working Group on “Teaching Lisbon” at this year's conference. The WG will be primarily based on discussion and sharing of experience among participants on the teaching of EU primary law for different audiences. Thus it invites participants to elaborate on the different approaches of teaching the Lisbon Treaty as a fundamental legal text to various specialists/disciplines.

Possible questions to be discussed from the perspective of different disciplines:

- Conceivable audiences (for whom is the Lisbon treaty of relevance at all?)
- When introducing the Lisbon Treaty as an object of study, what is the starting point? One article, or rather secondary literature on the treaty?
- Is there a kind of ‘minimum knowledge’ one could expect from a first- second- third year student? Do students have to read the treaty text at all?
- What aspects of the Lisbon Treaty are relevant to all disciplines?
- What are the experiences with “alternative” methods (visual, slides, power points, written texts, simulation exercises, study trips)?
- How are examples of good teaching shared in the academic community?
- Would it be feasible to create a “model syllabus” or a model list of literature for each discipline?

Introductory Statements:

Eugene Eteris, Riga Stradins University

Tobias Kunstein, University of Cologne

Alejandro Ribo Labastida, College of Europe, LISBOAN Teaching Award winner 2012 (tbc)

Discussion

Report

As the vast majority of conference participants preferred to join one of the other working groups, *Eugene Eteris* (Riga Stradins University), *Tobias Kunstein* (University of Cologne) and *Alejandro Ribo Labastida* (College of Europe) discussed teaching methods based on the experience of Alejandro Ribo Labastida with his simulation course on EU external crisis management. The course, which has been selected for the 2012 LISBOAN award, is an intensive 5-day simulation with several dozens of participants. In teams representing a number of different actors (EU institutions, but also national and international players), participants are confronted with the unfolding scenario of a crisis situation and must find a European response to the situation. A dedicated website serves as a central hub for communication between organizers and participants as well between participants, so that in theory new developments can occur at any point of the day (or night), depending on when individual teams publish a new document. Real-world meetings complement this form of online interaction.

Although the fact that one of the docents of the course is an official in the EEAS is a felicitous circumstance which hardly every university can emulate, the design of the course offers a valuable example of teaching EU studies in an innovative way. There is a certain level of technical know-how required in setting up a website, but current content management systems (such as typo3) make this investment relatively modest. In general, it must be rather surprising that so few universities use such simulation games as part of their curriculum (if the Lisbon Watch annual report is taken as a yardstick, not more than a quarter of institutions active in teaching EU affairs). Regardless of the specific topic of the simulation, these courses also allow to treat aspects of the Lisbon treaty in a very practical and attention-grabbing way

Yet, teaching the EU treaties as a basic EU legal source is a complicated and challenging task for various specialists and disciplines. Against this background, Eugene Eteris suggested creating a 'model syllabus', which would include a 'minimum knowledge' on EU integration in general and on the Lisbon treaty in particular, for all study sectors, specialists and disciplines. The model syllabus should be understood as a 'design program' that includes minimum theory and maximum practical parts/items/notions. It does not prevent lecturers in the member states to make their own additions, but could also be used to spread experiences with teaching methods such as visual, slides, power points, written texts, simulation exercises, study trips, e-learning etc.

The goals of activities revolving around teaching the Lisbon Treaty should not only focus directly on students, but would also include raising the quality of continuing professional development for teachers, trainers and other educational staff, e.g. a feasible outcome: permanent courses for teachers in European Studies and universities throughout the EU. A 'bold measurement' for impact of education & training on modern labour force and practical skills would help to improve the market for education in that it would signal to (prospective) students at which institutions high teaching quality can be found.

Returning to the Teaching Lisbon Working Group itself, given the low level of interest of LISBOAN participants in the topic of teaching, the concept of the working group will have to be rethought. Possibly, it could be linked to a more specific area of EU studies, following the example of the External Action Working Group.

Tobias Kunstein (University of Cologne)