

Working Group External Action and CFSP

Workpackage VI: External Action and CFSP (WP leader: Ian Manners)

Agenda

Thursday 10th May 2012

14.00 – 16.00 h

Fondation Universitaire, Rue d'Egmont 11

"Researching and Teaching EU External Action Post-Lisbon"

The LISBOAN network aims 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. While the first meeting of the External Action thematic working group focussed on researching the Treaty of Lisbon, this second meeting focuses on the links between the teaching and researching of the Treaty of Lisbon, with a particular emphasis on dissemination and communication.

14:00-14:30: Teaching and researching External Action after Lisbon (general discussion):

- Are there any members of the thematic working group who both teach and research External Action after Lisbon?
- What evidence is there of links between the teaching and researching of External Action after Lisbon?
- Are there any usable text books on the Lisbon Treaty, the EU after Lisbon, or External Action after Lisbon?
- What are the best methods to teach and research External Action after Lisbon?
- How will the textbook 'Research Methods in EU Studies' help overcome this gap between teaching and researching the EU after Lisbon?

14:00-14:30: Disseminating and communicating External Action after Lisbon (general discussion):

- Are there any members of the thematic working group who have been involved in disseminating and communicating knowledge about External Actions after Lisbon?
- What evidence is there of best practice in disseminating and communicating External Action after Lisbon?
- What evidence is there of the LISBOAN network contributing to knowledge about External Action after Lisbon?
- Can the LISBOAN workshops be used as the basis for producing a research-informed text that might improve dissemination and communication of External Action after Lisbon?
- Could members of the External Action thematic work group contribute to a research-informed text that might improve dissemination and communication of External Action after Lisbon?

14:30-15:00: Future cooperation and activities (general discussion):

- Future workshops
- Future conferences and panels
- Future dissemination and communication – planning a research-informed text on External Action after Lisbon

Chair: *Kennet Lynggaard*, Roskilde University

Report

The working group led by *Kennet Lynggaard* dealt with research and teaching of European Union topics related to External Action and Common Foreign and Security Policy.

After a brief welcome, Kennet Lynggaard gave a short introduction including the relevance of the topic and the main objectives of the working group. He started from a basic question: How to conduct research into EU affairs? In order to answer this question, he considered how research designs in EU studies could benefit from the broader social sciences. He continued by describing the field of European Union studies as a 'meeting place', where different disciplines come together. As such, EU study programmes and research centres areas were characterised by cutting across traditional faculty and department divides. As a result, EU studies were becoming an incubator for innovative, interdisciplinary research designs.

In reaction to these remarks, the group discussed fundamental approaches and exchanged ideas related to the very basic concepts and methods in research on the EU in general and EU external relations in particular. The main four topics the group dealt with concerned academic knowledge ambition, research ontology, research epistemology and research techniques. These topics gave rise to four questions formulated as dichotomies which guided the exchange of views:

- Should the ultimate knowledge ambition be to formulate explanatory theories capturing EU affairs, or should research be understood as a process of conceptual (re)constructions aimed at understanding EU affairs?
- Is the more common approach in research through rationalist or constructivist assumptions about EU affairs?
- Do academics best capture EU affairs through positivist and deductive research strategies, or through interpretative and inductive processes?
- Are quantitative or qualitative research methods and data preferable?

Kennet Lynggaard made reference to so-called bridge-builders who claim that these dichotomies should be conceived as continuums along which research activities may be placed during the research process. In this context, it was noted that moving beyond the traditional dichotomies quickly led to controversy.

The last point concerned possibilities of communication and dissemination as for EU External Action after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaties. Kennet Lynggaard presented the textbook project 'Research Methods in EU Studies' and discussed with the group whether the textbook would help overcome the gap between teaching and researching the EU after Lisbon.

At the end of the session, the participants gathered ideas about future cooperation and activities, such as panels, workshops and conferences. In the framework of LISBOAN, a workshop on the "Impact of the European External Action Service on the EU's relations and policies towards South East Europe" will take place in Dubrovnik on 5 October 2012. A

second workshop in the area of external action after the Lisbon treaty is planned for November 2012 in Berlin.

Tobias Kunstein (University of Cologne)