

Report

LISBOAN Roundtable „Lisbon & Crises”

June 17th 2011, 10.00 - 12.30 h

Chair: Wolfgang Wessels (University of Cologne)

Panellists: Edward Best (European Institute of Public Administration), Simon Bulmer (University of Sheffield), Brendan Donnelly (Federal Trust), Paul Luif (Austrian Institute for International Affairs), Ian Manners (Roskilde University), Nicolae Paún (Babes-Bolyai University), Lucia Rossi (University of Bologna)

After introductory remarks by Wolfgang Wessels, the panellists each introduced the main findings and conclusions of their respective working groups regarding the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on their subject as such and their research. In their contributions, they addressed inter alia several guiding questions: “Does the Lisbon Treaty make a difference? Did the Lisbon Treaty change the agenda and/or perspective of the academic discussion? Who are the winners/losers in the new context of the Lisbon Treaty?”.

As for External Action and CFSP “Lisbon changed everything, but so far nothing changed”, Ian Manners, WP leader of the respective work package, pointed out. He went on by explaining his statement with the very vague wording of the Lisbon treaty that is open for interpretation in the respective field so that it was still not clear how exactly this policy area will evolve. As far as the academic consequences are concerned, Ian Manners indicated that the EU is getting more and more complex. The consequence was that studying “EU-Studies” is no longer possible, since for each area of EU polity, politics and policies detailed knowledge is necessary and the overall subject cannot be imparted within one study programme only. He argued that EU studies now formed part of every academic field (such as sociology etc.) and were no longer centred around Brussels. When it comes to the theoretical level of approaching the subject area, Ian Manners said that the dichotomy of “supranational” versus “intergovernmental” had become irrelevant.

Lucia Rossi, WP leader of WP “Quasi-constitutional nature of the Lisbon Treaty”, seconded Ian Manners’ conclusions. So far there were hardly any differences visible because there was a continuation of the constitutional process. However, she added that there was movement, albeit only in little steps”. In legal terms, she believed, there was already a constitution existing. There are exclusive competences, autonomy and Fundamental Rights included, but only the final steps are not introduced, e.g. the symbols. But the decisive factor was solidarity. This is what the WP will deal with in the upcoming meetings.

The work package leader of “Area of Freedom, Security and Justice”, Paul Luif, elaborated on the profound changes in the respective area. While before the Lisbon Treaty the AFSJ was like a “marble cake”, he described that the shared competences have increased because all areas of this field are now dealt by the ordinary legal procedure. Additionally, the Court of Justice of the European Union was now playing a bigger role. Paul Luif especially pointed to the “negative synergy” between Council and European Parliament. The Council seemed not to take the European Parliament seriously, while the European Parliament seemed not to deal seriously with the issue area but focused exclusively on Human Rights, neglecting security issues. In his eyes this led to the impression that the European Parliament tended to focus on the “nice things” while leaving “the bad things” to the member states. An additional conclusion of the working group was that the operational dimension of Justice and Home Affairs was getting more and more important.

Nicolae Paun as the representative of the working group on “The Lisbon Treaty in an historical perspective” elaborated on the link between the transition period in the central and eastern European states after 1989 and the emergence of the Lisbon Treaty. The main finding of the working group was that the Lisbon Treaty in the “new” member states - and in contrast to the older member states - often was seen as the completion of the “reunification of the continent” and therefore had a very positive reputation.

Simon Bulmer, WP leader of WP “ Integration Theory and Governance Research after Lisbon, pointed to the fact in times of crises EU researcher tended to be “event-follower”. He suggested for the academic agenda to focus on macro- and meso- theories and encouraged researchers to contribute to new theories.

Brendan Donnelly concluded the roundtable by elaborating on the discussions and findings of the working group on the EU’s institutional framework. He pointed to the significant individual changes within the Lisbon Treaty but agreed with the previous speakers that the impact of these changes had not been visible so far. Therefore conclusions were mostly speculative and there was still a lot to be worked through in research and teaching respectively.

The roundtable concluded with a discussion among panellists and the audience. Main topics were the relevance (or irrelevance) of the dichotomy of supranational versus intergovernmental and the current economic and financial crisis and the impact of the Lisbon Treaty.