

Report

LISBOAN Working Group Workpackage I (WP leader: Edward Best)

“The EU’s Institutional Framework Post Lisbon”

June 16th 2011, 13.30 - 15.00 h

Chaired by *Edward Best* (European Institute of Public Administration), the Working Group Workpackage I analysed the EU’s institutional framework post Lisbon and focused on “The EU institutions after Lisbon: Shifts in Interinstitutional Balance, and Challenges for Efficiency and Legitimacy”. The chair outlined the main question of the discussion: Has the Lisbon Treaty produced a lasting institutional framework?

The first speaker *Richard Corbett* (Cabinet of the President of the European Council) directly addressed this question by sketching the current reluctance of EU actors to start a thorough institutional reform process all over again. He added however the fact that there are already several minor treaty changes underway; be it by attaching protocols to the upcoming Croatian accession treaty or the anticipated application of the simplified treaty revision procedure. The Lisbon Treaty could also rather be described as an evolution than a revolution. By outlining the many changes brought by Lisbon, such as the increased competences for the European Parliament, increased Qualified Majority Voting in the Council and the new posts of the president of the European Council and the High Representative, he discussed the statement by some researchers that the Union moved in an intergovernmental direction. Although admitting that due to the very nature of recently debated policy fields like economic policy the impression of an intergovernmentalisation of the EU might appear, he asserted that the post-Lisbon EU can still be characterized as being rather balanced between supranational and intergovernmental features.

The second speaker, *Emilio De Capitani* (European Parliament), focused his presentation on the distribution of competences and turf battles between the rather political (e.g. Members of European Parliament) and bureaucratic (e.g. Commission officials) actors of the EU system by analysing the historical developments of this dichotomy from the very technical beginnings of the High Authority in the 1950s over the evolution of the European Council and the European Parliament in the 1980s to the current state after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Although a constantly evolving system, a clear tendency to a “politicization” of the EU institutions could be observed in general. He shed light on the changes since 2004 which can be characterized by a loss of power of the Commission, the establishment of new agencies such as FRONTEX and the increasing role of the European Parliament, Contesting the claim that the Commission has lost powers in recent institutional changes, *Sebastian Kurpas* (European Commission), wanted to leave the “zero-sum-logic” of the distribution of competences in the EU. He sketched the perspective of the European citizens for which the central issue is the ability of the EU to deliver efficient policy solutions and stated that the reforms brought by the Lisbon Treaty were an important step in this direction. He further outlined the role of the Barroso Commission in the current discussions on economic governance and its inter-institutional relations to other EU organs.

The final speaker, *Esther Versluis* (University of Maastricht), presented her research on the implementation of EU policy in general and the role of agencies in particular. She stressed the ever-increasing importance of agencies in the EU system over the last 10 years through the establishment of many new ones and a delegation of powers to them. By citing the case of the railway agency, she outlined the complex relationship between agencies and other EU institutions such as the Commission and EU member states.

The two discussants, *Brendan Donnelly* (Federal Trust) and *Michael Kaeding* (European Institute of Public Administration), commented on the presentations of the speakers and added their own analysis regarding certain issues such as the future role of the new European External Action Service, the question of democratic legitimacy of the European Parliament, delegated acts and the new European Citizens Initiative. The final discussion of the Workpackage among the participants focused on, *inter alia*, the role of the Courts in Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Karlsruhe, the future development of the Europe 2020 strategy and the question on how to use the institutional structures to increase the turnout of the elections of the European Parliament.