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LISBOAN

Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network

Report from the Workshop “Parliaments and the European Union - European Representative Democracy after the Lisbon Treaty”

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6th July 2011, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London

Report

As part of the activities of Work Package 1, which is devoted to the Union's institutions, the Federal Trust held a workshop in London on 6th July to discuss the roles of the European and national parliaments after Lisbon and the appropriate relationship between these two levels of parliamentary representation. In addition to speakers from the Federal Trust, panelists included representatives from the Istituto Affari Internazionali, the University of Maastricht, the University of Rotterdam and the Clingendael Institute. Subjects discussed included the representativity of the European Parliament, its appropriate workings after the Lisbon Treaty, the enhanced involvement of national parliaments in the European legislative process after the Treaty and the reality or otherwise of an EU "demos".

On most of the abovementioned subjects, widely differing views were expressed, both by the invited speakers and the approximately forty other participants. In particular, no consensus could be reached on the desirability, or even feasibility, of changes which are sometimes advocated in order to enhance the representativity of the European Parliament, such as the election of the Commission President alongside the elections for the European Parliament; the setting up of transnational European parties; or the politicization within the European Parliament. The only issue where some agreement was possible seemed to be the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty regarding national parliaments, about which many doubts of a practical and philosophical nature were expressed. A majority of the participants claimed that, historically, the creation of a political "demos", however precisely defined, tended to follow rather than precede the setting up of the political institutions to which it related. Even if it is today true that no "demos" exists for the European Union, it does not therefore follow that no such "demos" could ever come into being as a result of institutional developments within the Union's structure of governance.

Programme:

13.45 – 14.00: Registration

Session 1: The European Parliament

14.00 – 14.20: “Who does the European Parliament Represent?”

*Maurice Fraser, Senior Fellow in European Politics, European Institute, LSE;
and Associate Fellow, Chatham House*

14.20 – 14.40: “The European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty”

Raffaello Matarazzo, Istituto Affari Internazionali

14.40 – 15.00: Q&A

15.00 – 15.20: Coffee & Tea

Session 2: National Parliaments

15.20 – 15.40: “What can national parliaments contribute to European democracy?”

*Professor Jaap de Zwaan, University of Rotterdam and Adviser at
Clingendael - Netherlands Institute of International Relations*

15.40 – 16.00: “National Parliaments after Lisbon: Can they make the Union more democratic?”

Dr Anna-Lena Högenauer, University of Maastricht

16.00 – 16.20: Q &A

Session 3: The EU demos

16.30 – 16.50: “European political parties – A building bloc of the EU demos?”

John Palmer, the Federal Trust and European Policy Centre

16.50 – 17.10: “The EU demos – Fantasy or reality?”

Professor Doris Wydra, University of Salzburg

17.10 – 17.30: Q&A

17.30 – 17.45: **Concluding Remarks by the Chairman**

Brendan Donnelly, Director, The Federal Trust

17.45: Reception