



Newsletter May 2007

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF EUROPEAN STUDIES SPEAKS AT UL

Professor David Coombes, who held the first Chair of European Studies at UL, returned to give a lecture on 2May on the topic of European federalism, his main theme being the pragmatism that underlay both the work of Madison in devising the American Constitution and the work of Jean Monnet in planning the first steps of European integration in the 1950s. Prof Coombes commented on the current European Constitution and stressed that since most people in the EU had ratified the text, something very like it would have to emerge - eventually. Prof Coombes was a guest of the Dept of Politics and Public Administration.

CEUROS PhD SCHOLARSHIP : EU ENERGY POLICY AND CIVIL AVIATION

Thanks to sponsorship from a multinational company based in the United States, CEUROS will be offering a three-year PhD scholarship 2007-2010. Applications are invited from researchers willing to undertake investigations within the following remit: Research proposals should address the role of aviation in climate change in the context of EU policies on energy use and carbon trading, and examine options on how best to minimise the impact of aviation on climate change and energy use taking into account both the interests of the aviation industry and the benefits of aviation to EU citizens. Applications with names of two referees, a CV and a 1500 word research proposal should be sent to The Director, CEUROS, University of Limerick, or email to edward.moxon-browne@ul.ie

CEUROS STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN PSAI SEMINAR AT TCD

CEUROS was well represented at the extremely well organised and attended PSAI conference in Trinity College in April (27th & 28th). The travelling party included one MA in International Studies student, two MA in European Integration students and one PhD student. MA in European Integration, Celine Ryan's paper argued the case for continued enlargement of the European Union, dealing in particular with examples from the 2004 accession countries. These countries had many changes to implement prior to the completion of the enlargement process, and

the improvement in their economies was apparent on reviewing statistical data, with the argument of Europe also benefiting from an increased market being put forward. Prospects of future enlargement were discussed, from progress with such countries such as Croatia, to breakdown in talks with Turkey due to various unresolved issues in connection with Cyprus. Enlargement fatigue and absorption capacity was also discussed in the section on future enlargements. The paper concluded by stating that continued enlargement was going to be a slower process into the future, however, it will surely continue for the EU's chosen few neighbours.

MA European Integration student, Fiona Richardson looked at the 'Non' and 'Nee' from the French and Dutch electorate in 2005 to the EU's Constitutional treaty. Fiona argued that these 'No' votes have caused considerable upset for the European Union and has hurled the member states into a constitutional crisis. Two years have passed since the referenda and little light has been shed on the future of the document. Fiona asks the question 'What do we do next?' Despite calls from member states to scrap the treaty, or to introduce only some of its aspects, Fiona concluded that there was only one viable option for the treaty's future -to keep the treaty and use it as the basis for renegotiation. The result will be a treaty that has been debated over a period of at least 10 years, a feature that will stand to its final draft.

Mitchell Scholar and MA in International Student, John Velasco continued the theme of the significance of the failure of the constitutional treaty. John examined how the failure of the Constitutional Treaty in the French and Dutch referendums in 2005, made understanding the dynamics of European Public Opinion crucial. John developed a research project to gauge the impact of public discourse, political ideology, and the EU Presidency on public opinion in Ireland, France, and Denmark from 1996-2005. Generally, he found that as the amount of public discourse increases, so too does the public's approval of the EU. Furthermore, the EU Presidency was a statistically significant and positive factor contributing to public opinion in Denmark. This study will be broadened to include the EU-15 as a part of John's M.A. dissertation.

In a separate panel titled 'The European Union's International Affairs', PhD student Barry Hussey presented a strategic-theory-based alternative to the study of the international affairs of the EU. While the main part of this paper was given over to examining the theoretical implications of a Strategic approach to the EU's external actions, the paper also referred to the importance of dialectic within academic debates and the need for critical voices within these debates to ensure theory develops. Barry's paper firstly examined the NPE approach and showed examples where the absence of an alternative approach had led to theoretical inertia within the discourse. Secondly, the paper presented what is entailed in a Strategic approach to the EU's international affairs. The paper concluded with possible applications of the strategic approach and the benefits of such an approach in comparison to NPE approaches.

The papers were all of a very high standard and were received extremely well in the question and answer sessions. Congratulations to all those who attended.

Barry Hussey

CEUROS DIRECTOR SPEAKS ON MACEDONIA AT IEA DUBLIN

On 25 April, Prof. Eddie Moxon-Browne addressed the Institute for European Affairs in Dublin on the topic of Macedonia and the European Union. This was the first time the IEA had been addressed by a member of CEUROS in its ten-year history. Part of the IEA official Report on the seminar is reproduced here:

“The Macedonian judiciary had been singled out for criticism on grounds of inefficiency. It is clearly under-resourced and requires reform and retraining. The country has slipped from 97th to 105th in the international corruption league table between 2004 and 2006 and ranks above only Albania in the regional ratings. Mr Moxon-Browne said that Macedonians argue that their country needs to follow the example of Slovenia or Ireland in terms of economic development but still have to realise that both these latter countries have the advantages of political stability, sound administrative structures, and effective judicial and legal systems. He said that Macedonia enjoys generally good relations with its neighbours but the dispute with Greece over the name of the state has been rumbling on for over a decade. While some new ideas for a compromise have emerged recently, the decision of the new Government in Macedonia to re-name Skopje’s tiny airport ‘Alexander the Great International’ had not been helpful!

Relations with Albania are good along a lengthy border. However, in his view, the treatment of the DUI party after the elections (even though it was supported by 60% of the ethnic Albanian vote) had given rise to some disquiet amongst its followers who feel themselves side-lined on the national political scene.

Meanwhile, an ongoing debate about the Constitutional Treaty throws the whole enlargement issue into uncertainty. Repeated political commitments on future EU membership have been given to the countries of the Western Balkans, but opinion in places such as France has hardened against such developments at least in the immediate future. Any idea of a Western Balkans ‘big bang’ enlargement must be discounted, he concluded. Individual countries are at different stages of development and transition, and each will be treated, and ought to be treated on its own merits. In this context, Montenegro may yet emerge as something of ‘dark horse’ in the EU accession race,

CEUROS POSTGRADS STAR AT EUSA IN MONTREAL

European Union Studies Association (EUSA) is one of the leading scholarly and professional associations worldwide focussing on the EU and the processes of European integration. Founded in 1988, it now has 2000 members in over thirty countries representing the social sciences, humanities, business, law, and policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic. The 10th Biennial Conference of EUSA was held in Montreal, Canada on 17-19 May 2007. Two PhD researchers from CEUROS presented papers: Annelin Andersen spoke on "Did Europe Cost the Election? An Analysis of the impact of the European issue on social democratic support in Sweden" and Helen Young on "Untangling the Spider's Web:EU decision-making at the UN".

THEY SAID...

"Yes, but...really, it's going down".

Professor Pat O'Connor (Dean Humanities) on hearing that after several years of gradual decline, the CAO cut-off point for BA European Studies had risen sharply in the last two years.

"I may shout at you next week"

A foreign graduate student emails to say he may get in touch (give a shout?) next week.

"Its a wait of my shouilders" (sic)

A fourth year student sends an email expressing gratitude for an essay deadline extension.

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