

# Political Integration: Where next?

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“Europe is very complex, it’s very complicated and if somebody wants to get 100% then we all lose together.” Hans-Gert Pöttering, European Parliament president<sup>1)</sup>

March 23, 2007 saw the European Union (EU) reach the grand old age of 50. With 27 Member States (and a number waiting in the wings), 13 members of the Euro-zone<sup>2)</sup> and a developing reputation as a ‘soft-power’ superpower, the EU, just like a fine wine seems to be improving with age<sup>3)</sup>. The sentiment of the accompanying *Berlin Declaration* in highlighting its achievements would seem to concur: peace, prosperity, common market, single currency, democracy promotion, enlargement etc<sup>4)</sup>. The Declaration also stressed that in the face of transnational challenges that: ‘The European Union is our response to these challenges’<sup>5)</sup>. Eminent scholars such as Andrew Moravcsik (‘it is a success

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1) *European Voice*, March 8-14, 2007, p.12

2) Slovenia became the 13th member when it adopted the Euro on January 1, 2007. Malta and Cyprus will be admitted on January 1, 2008.

3) Although the EU remains anchored to a trajectory with an unknown final destination it continues to be a point of reference and/or role model for others around the world wishing to embark upon regional integration.

4) It should not be forgotten that the EU has to operate on a budget of approximately 1.24 per cent of the gross national income of the Member States.

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of epochal proportions<sup>6)</sup>) and practitioners such as Sir Stephen Wall ('it has been a huge political and economic success'<sup>7)</sup>) also highlight its accomplishments. When it comes to the future however the shadow of self-doubt is plain for all to see. According to a *European Voice* editorial, 'Like many 50-year-olds, the Union needs to be reassured about its achievements, to clarify its beliefs and to set resolutions for the future.'<sup>8)</sup> In a similar tone Timothy Garton-Ash pointed out '...everyone knows that beneath the surface, political Europe is not in party mood about itself. The community is morose, ill-tempered and uncertain of its future.'<sup>9)</sup> Central to future developments is the current impasse over the Constitutional Treaty the goal of which, from my perspective, includes four distinct yet interwoven issues: the desire to foster the EU's capacity to deliver; the need to forge stronger linkages between EU citizens and the EU institutions; the desire to enhance the EU's presence on the global stage and; the need to deal with the structural and functional tensions between Member States and the EU's institutional architecture<sup>10)</sup>.

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5) See *Declaration on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the signature of the Treaties of Rome*. This is available at: [http://www.eu2007.de/de/News/download\\_docs/Maerz/0324-RAA/English.pdf](http://www.eu2007.de/de/News/download_docs/Maerz/0324-RAA/English.pdf)

6) Andrew Moravcsik, 'The world's quiet superpower', *European Voice*, March 29-April 3, 2007, p.18

7) Stephen Wall, (former EU advisor to Tony Blair) 'Vision and leadership are lacking today', *FT.com*, March 20, 2007. He goes on to say because '...uniquely in the history of international organisations, the member governments empowered the EC's institutions - Commission, Parliament and Court of Justice - to stand aside from the structures and constraints of national governments and, in clearly defined ways, to have authority over those governments,' <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=Vision%20and%20leadership&y=0&aje=true&x=0&id=070320010341>. (Accessed May 30, 2007)

8) 'A melodramatic declaration is not enough', *European Voice*, March 8-14, 2007, p.8

9) Timothy Garton-Ash 'Today's European Union is 27 states in search of a story', *Guardian Unlimited*, January 4, 2007. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1982465,00.html>. (Accessed May 30, 2007)

10) The Constitutional Treaty sought a number of structural changes that are deemed necessary for the efficient functioning of an enlarged EU as well as

While all sides stress the need to deliver (to provide, according to the modern jargon, a *value-added*), to become more relevant to ordinary citizens and to play an enhanced role at the global level, it is the organisational implications associated with the fulfilment of such a role, including the potential deepening of political integration, that remains a fundamental point of contention. At its most basic, the debate, which for the most part is taking place at the elite level, can be personified in the views of two former foreign secretaries Jack Straw (UK) and Joschka Fischer (Germany). Jack Straw, for example, argued that ‘...the original plan for Europe which was a federal Europe is dead...but the idea of... independent sovereign states working together... is alive....’<sup>11)</sup> In contrast, in light of certain structural realities, Joschka Fischer, called for: ‘The transition from a union of states to full parliamentarization as a European Federation, something Robert Schuman demanded 50 years ago. And that means nothing less than a European Parliament and a European government which really do exercise legislative and executive power within the Federation.’<sup>12)</sup> It seems to me that the underlying premise of the opponents of political integration rests upon maintenance of present structures and reliance upon a series of minor and/or cosmetic changes as the best way of dealing with new

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the best way to give the EU a greater voice on the world’s stage. This included, amongst others, the need for an EU President and Foreign Minister. For more information on this see ‘What the Constitution Says’, *BBC News website*, June 22, 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2950276.stm>. (Accessed June 1, 2007)

11) *The Today Programme*, BBC Radio 4, July 1, 2005.

12) The structural changes that Fischer was referring to included the single market and single currency, and at that time the forthcoming enlargement. See Joschka Fischer ‘From Union to Federation: Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration’, speech presented at Humboldt University, Berlin, May 12, 2000, pp.4-5 of 8. A copy of the speech can be found at [http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ea/2000\\_summer/ea\\_sum00d.html](http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ea/2000_summer/ea_sum00d.html). Earlier in his speech (p.2 of 8) he argued that: ‘A step backwards, even just standstill or contentment with what has been achieved, would demand a fatal price of all EU member states...’

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environmental conditions that affect the EU i.e. solutions can be found via the existing institutional architecture without the need for enhancing the EU's supranational qualities. In contrast, by desiring structural renewal advocates of political integration are arguing that, ultimately, certain things have to be done, irrespective of the desire for unity, in a bid to ensure a continuing relevance and legitimacy within the wider environment. Critics of the former camp claim that reliance on decision-making via the 'lowest common denominator' results in the slowest member of the club being able to dictate the future pace of development while critics of the latter camp argue that the clarion cry of a federal/political Europe (or as they see it a 'European Superstate') is out of synch with the times and that the constant institutional navel-guising leaves European citizens bored and bewildered.

Despite such opposing logics both views have found accommodation within the EU institutional architecture and just as importantly *mutual accommodation* with each other. Such a détente however is showing increasing signs of wear and tear in the face of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the on-going machinations surrounding the Constitutional Treaty and an increasing tendency on the part of some Member States to behave in an increasingly obstinate manner. Under such circumstances is it possible to imagine that the present incarnation of accommodation is approaching the end of its shelf-life?<sup>13)</sup> If that is indeed the case are there any alternatives that could continue to give solace to both sides? In recent years the use of 'differentiated forms of inte-

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13) As the memory of WWII fades so too does the EU's ability to draw legitimacy from its facilitation of peace, prosperity and stability. This can be seen in the comments of Dutch Socialist Party Leader Wouter Bos (as relayed by Simon Kruper) who when explaining why his compatriots were able to vote 'no' in the referendum said, 'But I was born in a Europe where all that existed'. See Simon Kruper 'WWII fading from Europe's memory', *The Financial Times* in *The Daily Yomiuri*, May 16, 2005.

gration' have been heralded as providing that alternative<sup>14)</sup>. Such calls have been amplified in the wake of the experiences associated with the Euro (13 out of 27 members) and the Schengen Agreement (which was signed-up to by 5 Member States in 1985 and has now been implemented, in full, by 13 Member States) that have shown that Member States need not all march forward at the same pace or indeed sign-up to a specific policy.

In light of the above, therefore, the goal of this paper is to speculate 'where next for political integration and the EU'? In so doing the paper argues that the present situation is being influenced by two symbiotic trends: an increasing differentiation of views from amongst the Member States that, in turn, is facilitating debate about the use of 'differentiated forms of integration' to accommodate such views. In section 2 I will highlight a number of issues that exemplify the increasing signs of tension between opponents and proponents of political integration. Section 3, by pointing out some of the generally recognised problems that the EU currently faces, will advance a number of ideas that are being touted as solutions to these problems and which, at the same time, could have major implications for the future development of the EU. Ultimately though, as pointed out in the conclusion, whichever pathway is selected the future is tied to the choices/political will of national Mem-

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14) While newspapers tend to use many of the terms associated with 'differentiated integration' interchangeably academics have sought a more nuanced understanding. Kerstin Junge, for example, differentiates between a *multi-speed Europe* 'the aim of which is therefore to achieve, not permanently but merely temporarily, different degrees of integration', p.396. and *Europe à la carte* 'Unlike multi-speed Europe, Europe *à la carte* thus allows for different degrees and forms of integration on a permanent basis and gives up on the idea of uniform progression towards a supranational, and possibly even an ultimately federal, political system', p.397. See Kerstin Junge, 'Differentiate d European Integration', in Michelle Cini (ed.) *European Union Politics*, (2nd Edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp.391-404.

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ber State leaders, a position recognised by both opponents and proponents of political integration alike<sup>15)</sup>. As Magnette puts it, more succinctly, 'European integration is not driven by its own ideology; it reflects the governments' predominant preferences.'<sup>16)</sup>

## 2.0. Competing tensions between opponents and proponents of political integration

One aspect of the history of European integration has been the 'push-pull' tensions over the type and extent of integration. Advocates of a political Europe whose calling card heralds an 'ever closer union' that rests upon a foundation of solidarity, enhanced supranational structures and processes and a constitution<sup>17)</sup>, looked forward to a time when: 'Political actors in several, distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions process or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states.'<sup>18)</sup> In contrast the presence of the national in-

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15) Take Joschka Fischer, for example who states: 'That is why it would be an irreparable mistake in the construction of Europe if one were to try to complete political integration against the existing national institutions and traditions rather than by involving them...The completion of European integration can only be successfully conceived if it is done on the basis of a division of sovereignty between Europe and the nation-state.', p.5 of 8. As at fn 12.

16) Paul Magnette, *What is the European Union? Nature and Prospects*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p.19.

17) The Schuman Plan of 1950 sought to merge French and German Coal and Steel production and place it under the control of the supranational High Authority. The Declaration claimed that 'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' It went on to say 'By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.' Source: *Declaration of May 9, 1950 (The Schuman Plan)*. This can be found at: [http://europa.eu.int/abc/symbols/9-may/decl\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/abc/symbols/9-may/decl_en.htm).

terest ensured a counter trajectory. An insightful story relayed by Dinan offers a perfect illustration of this. Commenting on the debate surrounding the geographical location of the new institutions associated with the *European Coal and Steel Community* (ECSC) in 1952, the Dutch foreign minister, Dirk Stikker, stated:

‘For many months we had based our discussions on high principles of supranationalism and the exclusion of selfish, purely nationalistic interests...Questions of national prestige began to rise in importance...No one was prepared to give way on any point before he had obtained another advantage. Europe was lost sight of...After some hours I returned, but it was still four o’clock [in the morning] before every *national desire* was satisfied.’<sup>19)</sup>

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century such nationalist interests tend to emerge during election campaigning, prior to EU Summits or in the wake of new EU legislation resulting in the EU being perceived, at worst, as a threat to the national interest<sup>20)</sup> and at best as a nuisance.<sup>21)</sup> An editorial in the

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18) Ernst Haas quoted in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez ‘Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory’, in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez (eds.) *European Integration Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.2.

19) Desmond Dinan, *Europe Recast: A History of the European Union*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p.54. *Emphasis added*. Equally insightful are his remarks on the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) that led to the formation of the ECSC Dinan writes: ‘Although a spirit of reconciliation hovered over the conference, hard bargaining characterized the negotiations themselves. The prospect of European security through limited economic integration, rather than the ideal of European unity, drove the proceedings.’ Ibid, pp.50-51.

20) The former German President Roman Herzog, for example, begged the question that the influence of the EU and the extent of its law-making competence threatened Germany’s parliamentary democracy. See ‘EU threatening parliamentary democracy, says ex-German president’, *EUobserver.com*, January 15, 2007. <http://euobserver.com/9/23250>. (Accessed January 15, 2007)

21) In the run-up to the December 2006 EU Summit the UK’s Prime Ministerial spokesperson was quoted as saying ‘...we are not going down the road

*European Voice*, for example, criticised both the main French Presidential candidates for their ‘populist assaults on Brussels’ and arguments against the Euro and EU competition policy that ‘are blatantly wrong and unashamedly hypocritical.’<sup>22)</sup> Just as worrying is the tendency for the ‘...elite to agree to policies they believe are right for their countries but dare not sell at home. They then implement those policies, while blaming the consequences on Brussels.’<sup>23)</sup> In 2007 Poland and the Czech Republic are emerging as the new face of the euro-sceptic camp with the UK, Netherlands and Denmark riding pillion. Czech President Vaclav Klaus, for example, has become well-known for his forceful critique of many aspects of the European Union. From his perspective: ‘The acceleration of integration during the past 20 years has been realized by a gradual but systematic undermining of the former inter-governmental nature of relations between countries.’<sup>24)</sup>

For advocates of political integration, the present trajectory is taking the project way-off course. Supranationalism and solidarity are being submerged by events. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the voters of France and the Netherlands in 2005, the formation of a new

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of anything that is against our national interest.’ Quoted in ‘EU endorses tough new stand on membership’, *The Independent*, December 15, 2006. <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article2076141.ece>. (Accessed May 30, 2007)

22) ‘Lies will return to haunt France’s next president’, *European Voice*, April 4-11, 2007, p.8

23) Martin Wolf, ‘A more efficient EU is less democratic’, *FT.com* June 14, 2005. <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=A+more+efficient+EU&y=7&aje=true&x=20&id=050614008459>. (Accessed May 30, 2007)

24) See Vaclav Klaus, ‘Why Europe must reject centralisation’, *FT.com*, August 29, 2005. <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=Why+Europe+must+reject+centralisation&y=0&aje=true&x=0&id=050829006030>. (Accessed May 30, 2007) See also ‘The Czech Republic and the EU after the French and Dutch Referendums’, speech given by Vaclav Klaus at the University of Oxford, September 18, 2005. This can be found at: <http://www.klaus.cz/klaus2/asp/clanek.asp?id=iTrpnK4iCtGd>



far-right (Euro-sceptic) grouping within the European Parliament<sup>25)</sup>, and the increasing frequency of spats between Member States<sup>26)</sup>. This latter example can be exemplified by the murmurings of discontent within the *Committee of Permanent Representatives* (COREPER):

“It’s not working well”, one ambassador said “We are losing that sense of being in a club where we try to help each other out”, said another...Ambassadors claim that coreper’s decline means that business often erupts into high-level ministerial spats instead of being settled behind closed doors in Brussels.”<sup>27)</sup>

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25) The new grouping was named *Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS)*. The group coalesces around Christianity and the family and opposes Turkish membership of the EU as well as immigration and the EU Constitution. To form a parliamentary group you need 20 members from at least 6 different member states. Group status brings numerous material (EU funds) and non-material benefits such as more speaking time. The necessary boost in numbers to form the group came from the accession of Bulgaria (1 member) and Romania (5 members) on January 1, 2007 following the appointment of MEPs based on a party’s domestic parliamentary size. The Group was strengthened in the wake of elections in Bulgaria in May 2007 when its member party increased its strength from 1 to 3 seats. Elections in Romania have yet to be held. At the time of writing the other Parliamentary groups from across the spectrum have sought to marginalise this new grouping and prevent them from gaining any committee positions.

26) Spats between Germany and Poland generated numerous headlines at the end of 2006, the beginning of 2007 and during the 21-22, June Summit. The Polish government was also embroiled in a spat with the European parliament over its requirement for *lustration* that resulted in one of the most famous Polish dissidents Geremek refusing to sign and being threatened by his national government with losing his European Parliamentary seat. The situation remains on hold following the decision of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal that found the new *lustration law* unconstitutional.

27) ‘Bucharest, Sofia party as opinions harden in west’, *FT.com*, December 29, 2006. <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=Bucharest%2C+Sofia&y=0&aje=true&x=0&id=061229005042>. (Accessed May 30, 2007). For more on COREPER see Jeffrey Lewis, ‘National Interests’, in John Peterson and Michael Shackleton (eds.) *The Institutions of the European Union*, Second Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp.273-291.

In addition those who advocate more political integration are also faced with the problem that in a media-visual world what takes place in Brussels, despite its significance, does not make 'good' television. As Paul Reynolds puts it:

'The trouble is that European Union stories are often the reverse of what traditional news people think of as a decent story: the personalities don't glitter, rarely clash in public, and the art of slow and steady compromise doesn't make for easy headlines. So it would be easy for a news organisation to say, 'Why bother?' The answer is: 'Because it matters.'"<sup>28)</sup>

Taken together the above mentioned examples do little to animate the EU in the eyes of EU citizens most of whom are either too young to be enamoured by its founding logic of peace, prosperity and anti-Soviet communism, and/or whom increasingly associate the EU with bureaucracy<sup>29)</sup>. Thus as developments shunt the EU in a direction where the leg-

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28) Paul Reynolds quoting the BBC senior Europe correspondent Mark Mardall 'Europe in search of a purpose', *BBC News Website*, March 13, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6434675.stm>. (Accessed March 13, 2007)

29) See for example 'EU citizens voice concern at meddling eurocrats', and the connected FT/Harris poll, *FT.com*, March 18, 2007. [http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?\\_0&aje=true&x=0&id=070318003739](http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?_0&aje=true&x=0&id=070318003739). (Accessed May 30, 2007) It is important to note however that the picture is not necessarily uniform across the EU. Take the following assertion from Dana Spinant for example: 'While Brits or Scandinavians would be against more powers being given to the Union, deploring the erosion of sovereignty of their governments or parliaments, most Romanians are grateful that important decisions ruling their lives will no longer be made in Bucharest - but in Brussels, where some wiser people than their own leaders are in control. Tying the hands of their politicians with EU rules that are good enough to be applied in Germany or Sweden sounds like a very good plan to most Romanians.... So Romanians still do not find obsolete the argument that the EU is good because it brought peace and contributes to spreading freedom and democracy'. See 'Those messy accession celebrations', *European Voice*, 18-24 January 2007, p.12.

acy of its genesis no longer provides the protective legitimacy that it once did it is forced to search for other reasons to justify its existence. Such a task is not proving easy. As Benita Ferrero-Waldner (EU Commissioner responsible for external relations) admits ‘...the last 12 months have not been easy for us. There is an undeniable gap between our historic success and our citizens’ perceptions of the EU. Across Europe citizens are asking what the EU is for, what it is doing to respond to their concerns and how it will meet 21st-century challenges.’<sup>30)</sup>

### 3.0. Where Next?

A fundamental element of the equation ‘where next?’ is the party political alignment of the Member States over the next few years and the nature of interaction amongst national leaders. As the *Washington Post* put it, ‘Europe is undergoing its most dramatic changing of the guard in more than a decade. New leaders in the European Union’s three pre-eminent countries - Britain, France and Germany - not only may transform their nations individually but also have the collective clout to blast Europe out of its lethargy and revitalize it as a global and diplomatic powerhouse.’<sup>31)</sup> As well as pointing to the potential significance of national leaders though it is also important to recognise, as Peterson does (in relation to a wider cohort of ‘key actors’); that mapping out a leader’s position is far from being straightforward:

‘Here we come to grips with what, above all else, makes EU governance so difficult to theorise about: EU politics is a battle in which a variety of different cleavages usually can be identified on any particular issue. To an unusual extent, most key actors in EU politics simultaneously possess multiple interests or identities:

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30) ‘EU ready to face global tasks’, *The Daily Yomiuri*, May 9, 2006.

31) ‘New Leadership Trio Could Put Europe Back on Political Map’, *The Washington Post* in *The Daily Yomiuri*, May 22, 2007, p.12

national and supranational, sectoral and institutional, political and technical. Their actions may be motivated by different rationalities at different times. It is frequently difficult to predict how key actors will align themselves on any given issue or which battle along which cleavage will matter most in determining outcomes.<sup>32)</sup>

This complexity has undoubtedly multiplied in the wake of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements which has brought forth increasing intra-EU differentiation: the surge of enthusiasm for neo-liberalism from the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, in particular Estonia and Slovakia, that compares starkly with the traditional French view; different attitudes towards the United States; and, of course, different views about political integration. For Fischer such ‘...increasing differentiation will also entail new problems: a loss of European identity, of internal coherence, as well as the danger of an internal erosion of the EU, should ever larger areas of intergovernmental cooperation loosen the nexus of integration.’<sup>33)</sup> An additional variable in this equation concerns the changeable nature of Member State preferences. In November of 2006, for example, UK Europe Minister Geoff Hoon implied support for the increasing use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in certain areas. ‘To do nothing on improving the EUs decision-making would jeopardize the liberalisation of our markets, the benefits to consumers, tackling climate change and the enlargement process.’<sup>34)</sup> But by May 2007 the UK

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32) John Peterson, ‘The choice for EU theorists: Establishing a common framework for analysis’, *European Journal of Political Research* Vol.39 (3), 2001, pp.289-318. 292-93. Earlier in the article (p.290) he argues: ‘If there is one central tenet that now unites EU scholars it is that the Union is a polity that operates simultaneously at different levels. In Europe more than elsewhere the international, supranational, transnational, national, regional and sub-national are inextricably linked.’

33) See Joschka Fischer ‘From Union to Federation: Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration’, p.6 of 8. As at fn 12.

34) ‘Hoon risks row with plan to reform EU’, *Guardian Unlimited*, November

had apparently changed its position (or at least its priorities) insisting on the need to retain its veto, in areas related to the ‘third pillar’ Police and Judicial Co-operation, and the right to pursue ‘opt-outs’ in issues related to Justice and Home Affairs, that are now part of the ‘first pillar’.

Intra-EU differentiation is also blending with a series of challenges that the EU faces in this new environmental context. From this authors perspective the on-going debate can be seen to touch upon, as mentioned at the beginning, four distinct yet interwoven issues (see table one).

**Table One:** Problems and potential solutions

<p><b>Delivery Gap</b>  <b>Problem</b> - The EU can’t deliver on those issues (salient) that most people are concerned about.</p> <p><b>Solution</b> - <i>create a value-added</i>; focus on outputs in areas of public concern such as the environment, energy and security.</p>	<p><b>Cognitive/linkage deficit</b>  <b>Problem</b> - European citizens lack a cognitive knowledge/awareness of what the EU does and how it works hence they are not prepared to give it support.</p> <p><b>Solution</b> - <i>engage in legitimacy building</i> with EU citizens and stakeholders. Make use of transnational civil society and the transnational Euro-parties.</p>
<p><b>Capacity deficit</b>  <b>Problem</b> - In an era dominated by the impact of globalization are citizens prepared to allow the EU, rather than the nation states to make decisions on their behalf?</p> <p><b>Solution</b> - <i>become a soft-power super-power</i>; stress that globalisation demands transnational policy responses. Highlight the benefits for the Member States if the EU can assert its voice on the global stage.</p>	<p><b>Structural/functional tensions</b>  <b>Problem</b> - Tension between Member States concerning how much and how deep integration.</p> <p><b>Solution</b> - <i>enhance the EU’s capacity to act</i>. This may end up drawing upon techniques of <i>differentiated integration</i> and move the EU in the direction of a <i>two-speed</i> Europe.</p>

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3, 2006. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,,1938514,00.html>. (Accessed December 2, 2006)

One aspect of this typology could be the potential for a *catch-22 lock-in*. The inability to deliver leaves citizens with little reason to ask that the EU be given more responsibility thereby amplifying the cognitive/linkage deficit etc. This, in turn, translates into a situation where there is no willingness to deal with the structural/functional tensions. Another aspect of this typology could be a tendency to seek partial solutions in a 'pick & mix' fashion. For political integrationists striving for a comprehensive (and collective based) solution this is likely to store-up all sorts of future difficulties vis-à-vis cohesion, unity and solidarity. Hence if it becomes too difficult for all of the members to row in the same direction then maybe they will be inclined to opt for various forms of *differentiated integration* despite the implied dangers?<sup>35)</sup> I will now turn my attention to elaborating a little further each of the four elements.

#### **a )Dealing with the delivery-gap**

There is increasing evidence to indicate that citizens want the EU to play a role in areas related to 'human security', particularly protection against crime and terrorism and solutions regarding climate change and the environment<sup>36)</sup>. In response leaders are stressing the need to deliver/provide a *value-added*<sup>37)</sup>. Following meetings with the Polish Prime

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35) According to Kerstin Junge 'Traditionally the European integration process has advanced by means of a gradual transfer of power to the EU level, resulting in an ever closer union of all member states. Differentiated integration puts an end to this paradigm...the result of a loss of solidarity could thus be a two-class Community in which the poor and unwilling member states are left behind permanently...Differentiation also risks putting an end to the principle of non-hegemonic decision-making, that is, the premise that the bigger member states should not be able to dominate the decision-making process and thus impose their preferences on the smaller members.' Kerstin Junge, 'Differentiated European Integration', p.399. As at fn 14.

36) See the *Special Eurobarometer on the Future of Europe*, May 2006, p.41 [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm). Document held on file.

37) Such an argument has been presented on many occasions by leading European actors. Cecilia Malmstrom (Swedish Minister for EU Affairs), for example, wrote in 2007, 'Our citizens expect the EU to deliver but they want

Minister and President in April 2007, Tony Blair (at that time UK Prime Minister) was quoted as saying:

‘We [i.e. the UK and Poland] both want a Europe that is effective, that is practical, but a Europe that is one of sovereign and independent states collaborating and working together...But it is easier to make the case for our people when it is a Europe that is not arguing about things that are remote from people in the street, but are arguing about the bread and butter issues, the jobs, and the immigration and the crime and issues like energy, [issues] that are absolutely vital for our citizens.’<sup>38)</sup>

To provide such a *value-added* though Commission President Barroso argues that the Commission needs, a ‘capacity to act’<sup>39)</sup> which would seem to run counter to the first half of Blair’s statement. Whether or not the Member States are prepared to provide it with the necessary competence remains to be seen. Barroso, though, makes no apologies for his insistence that they should. Commenting on the issue of energy security he states: ‘I recognise that energy policy is a sensitive area, which touches on national choices. As I have said, it is for member states to choose their energy mix. But let me ask one question: How much energy sovereignty does a country have when it is almost totally dependent on oil and gas imports?’<sup>40)</sup>

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good value and they want to know what is really going on.’ See ‘No sacred cows in budget reform’, *European Voice*, April 4-11, 2007, p.9.

38) See ‘Blair wants end to ‘abstract’ EU’, *BBC News website*, April 27, 2007. See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/6598557.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6598557.stm). (Accessed April 27, 2007)

39) ‘Seeing through the hallucinations: Britain and Europe in the 21st Century Hugo Young Lecture, London, October 16, 2006. Speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. A copy of the speech can be found at <http://www.ukrep.be/Press/161006.doc>.

40) ‘Barroso to urge EU on energy overhaul’, *FT.com*, February 25, 2007.

**b) Dealing with the cognitive/linkage deficit**

A stick that is often used to beat the EU concerns the oft-cited 'democratic deficit'. Although some scholars, such as Moravcsik, claim it 'is a myth',<sup>41)</sup> the fact that it is widely perceived means that it cannot be ignored. One problem associated with addressing these concerns stems from the fact that: 'Modern democracy has been fashioned to suit the governing institutions of the territorial state, and it still remains to be seen if it can be adopted to transnational political bodies.'<sup>42)</sup> That said, however, the need to ensure that the public's voice is heard, something that has gained considerable momentum in recent years, has necessitated action. In a bid to engage more directly with EU citizens the Commission launched 'Plan D for Democracy' - spearheaded by Commissioner Margot Wallström (Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy)<sup>43)</sup>. As part of this initiative Wallström also declared that: 'Political parties are the lynchpin of any democratic system. A Europe-wide democracy therefore needs Europe-wide political parties or at least cross-border co-operation between national parties.'<sup>44)</sup> The 2006 *White Paper on Communication* consolidated this position when it heralded the Euro-parties<sup>45)</sup> as

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<http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?=0&aje=true&x=0&id=070225002875>. (Accessed May 30, 2007)

41) Andrew Moravcsik, 'The world's quiet superpower', as at fn 6.

42) Eva Etzioni-Halevy 'Linkage Deficits in Transnational Politics', *International Political Science Review*, Vol.23, No.2, 2002, pp.203-222. 204.

43) Key documents can be found via the website of Commissioner Wallström. See [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/wallstrom/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/index_en.htm). One of the more interesting aspects of this initiative was the European Citizens' Consultations. For more information on this see <http://www.european-citizens-consultations.eu/>.

44) Margot Wallström, 'Transnational Democracy - the road ahead for Europe', paper presented at IDEA, Stockholm, 10 June 2005. This is available at: <http://www.idea.int/about/anniversary/upload/Wallstrom.pdf>

45) For more information on the Euro-parties see Stephen Day and Jo Shaw, 'The Evolution of European Political Parties in the Era of European Citizenship', in Rachel A. Cichowski and Tanja Börzel (eds.) *State of the*



one of a number of key actors necessary for a ‘citizen-centred communication approach.’<sup>46)</sup> Prior to this, in 2004, the Euro-parties were able to secure a limited amount of EU funding<sup>47)</sup> and presently look to be on the verge of securing additional resources for the establishment of party-linked ‘European Think-tanks’. These are viewed as a way to stimulate a deeper and more political/ideological debate about EU policy choices hence are seen as another step in trying to connect with European citizens. Doubts about this whole exercise though have been most forcibly expressed by the Czech President Vaclav Klaus who claimed that the idea of/pursuit of ‘[a] “higher”, European-wide democracy is an illusion.’<sup>48)</sup>

### c ) Dealing with the capacity deficit

The quip ‘economic giant-political dwarf’ (or ‘capability-expectations gap’ in the academic literature) is symbolic of the need for the EU to do more if it wishes to promote/project its norms and values on the global stage.<sup>49)</sup> Most importantly, as Wallström puts it, (and at the same time the most problematic) is the need for the EU to ‘...act as one on

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*European Union Volume 6: Law, Politics and Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp.149-169.

46) *White Paper on a European Communication Policy (presented by the Commission)*, Brussels, 1.2.2006 COM (2006) 35 final, p.2.of 13.

47) For more on this see Stephen Day and Jo Shaw, ‘Political Parties in the European Union: towards a European Party Statute?’, in K. D. Ewing and Samuel Issacharoff (eds.) *Party Funding and Campaign Financing in International Perspective*, Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2006, pp.293-320.

48) See ‘The Czech Republic and the EU after the French and Dutch Referendums’, speech given by Vaclav Klaus at the University of Oxford, September 18, 2005. <http://www.klaus.cz/klaus2/asp/clanek.asp?id=iTrpnK4iCtGd>. (Accessed December 2, 2006)

49) For an interesting and lively discussion of many of the events associated with the issue of the EU as a superpower see Alex Warleigh-Lack ‘Conclusion: The Future of the European Union’, in Michelle Cini (ed.) *European Union Politics* (2nd Edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp.441-454.

the world stage.<sup>50)</sup> In addition as Javier Solana (High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General of the Council of the European Union) stressed, reiterating the words of Barroso, ‘above all, we need to safeguard Europe’s *capacity to act*.<sup>51)</sup> Taking centre stage and projecting a single voice is, of course, easier said than done. Splits between Member States over geo-political and other sensitive foreign policy-related issues are often very apparent. Such difficulties led Joschka Fischer to write that the ‘...view of Europe as a negligible political entity is shared in Beijing, Moscow and new Delhi.’<sup>52)</sup> Hence the need to nurture an atmosphere that can overcome such a view is seen as paramount. In the short-term as Commissioner Margot Wallström puts it:

‘The Commission will continue to fight for a Europe with a strong voice in the world. Internal and external coherence in our policies become even more important as we see that core policies, such as climate change, migration, terrorism, or energy, need to be addressed in a global context...We will pursue negotiations of new agreements with Russia and Ukraine and develop our ties with key partners further away such as the US, China, India, the ASEAN countries and Latin America.’<sup>53)</sup>

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50) Commissioner Margot Wallström in a speech entitled ‘Taking the European Union forwards: the next 50 years’, Lecture at the Netherlands Society for International Affairs, The Hague, April 19, 2007. This is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH%2F07%2F239&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en#0.5474530820771442>.

51) ‘New Leadership Trio Could Put Europe Back on Political Map’ As at fn 31. *Emphasis added*.

52) See Joschka Fischer ‘Europe’s Two Futures’, May 30, 2007. Project Syndicate carried in <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=112586&bolum=109>. (Accessed June 1, 2007)

53) Margot Wallström, ‘Presentation of the Commission’s Annual Policy Strategy (APS) for 2008 XXXVII COSAC, Bundestag, Berlin May 15, 2007. This is available at: [http://www.bundestag.de/internat/europa/euoparl/cosac\\_doks/rede\\_wallstroem.pdf](http://www.bundestag.de/internat/europa/euoparl/cosac_doks/rede_wallstroem.pdf)

Of course relations with key partners are never particularly straightforward. Take Russia for example. In recent years they had been dominated by intra-EU division but the frosty EU-Russia summit (May 18, 2007) saw an interesting shift as the EU presented a united front on issues relating to the banning of Polish meat imports; energy cuts to Lithuania; deteriorating relations with Estonia; and the future status of Kosovo. The solidarity shown by Member States came as a bit of a surprise to some commentators who had been used to the Kremlin being able to take advantage of divisions. Commission President Barroso was hopeful that the display of solidarity would have positive ramifications for future intra-EU matters. In reference to Poland's position on the Constitutional Treaty and other issues, he was quoted as saying, 'I hope Poland's leaders understand that solidarity is a two-way street.'<sup>54)</sup> Relations with Washington are much less taut (despite concerns caused by the on-going saga of Iraq and the failure to conclude the Doha Round of world trade talks) as evidenced by the April 30, 2007 EU-US Summit that stressed the need to secure development of their strategic partnership. This included initiating a single market, the creation of a transatlantic economic partnership by 2015, as well as numerous on-going political-security related measures<sup>55)</sup>. Further afield May 2007 saw the EU commence the process of negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with South Korea and ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations)<sup>56)</sup> which can be seen as a sign that the EU wishes to upgrade

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54) 'Barroso warns UK on EU Treaty', *FT.com*, May 31, 2007. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/c2045b80-0f93-11dc-a66f-000b5df10621.html>. (Accessed May 31, 2007)

55) See *Joint EU-US Statement following Annual Summit*, No.45/7, April 30, 2007 <http://www.eurunion.org/News/press/2007/2007045.htm>. (Accessed June 1, 2007)

56) See for example *Joint Ministerial Statement of the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the European Union Trade Commissioner on the Launch of Negotiations for the ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)*. <http://www.aseansec.org/ASEAN-EU-FTA.pdf>. (Accessed June 1, 2007)

its relations with this part of the globe.

#### d) Dealing with structural/functional tensions

The development of various organisational techniques that can be used by both opponents and proponents of political integration to assist in the facilitation of their vision of the future is already apparent. What remains unknown is the extent to which such tools are likely to be used. We can point to the existence of the *passerelle clause* which enables Member States, on the basis of unanimity, to support the use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in certain areas of policy making; *enhanced co-operation* which enables a minimum of eight Member States to forge ahead in certain limited areas although it is intended for use ‘...only as a last resort....’ (TEU 43a) and it requires that all Member States ‘shall be able to take part in the deliberations’ (44(1))<sup>57)</sup>; and the peer pressure/policy-learning approach associated with the *Open Method of Co-ordination* (OMC)<sup>58)</sup>. We can also highlight the existence of ‘*opt-outs*’ that give Member States the right not to be bound by EU law in certain areas as well as opportunities for *delayed implementation* and *derogations*. There are also a number of interesting initiatives associated with the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). These include ‘*Constructive abstention*’<sup>59)</sup> and the ‘*safeguard*

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57) Article 43 carries a list of safeguards that map out when the provision can be used and under what circumstances. See *The Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*. Available at: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/htm/C\\_2002325EN.000501.html](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/12002M/htm/C_2002325EN.000501.html). To date it has yet to be used

58) According to the EU ‘The OMC provides a new framework for cooperation between the Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Under this intergovernmental method, the Member States are evaluated by one another (peer pressure), with the Commission’s role being limited to surveillance. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice play virtually no part in the OMC process.’ [http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/open\\_method\\_coordination\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm). (Accessed June 1, 2007)

59) Article 23 (1) of the Treaty on European Union reads: ‘Decisions under

*clause*' (introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam) which enables a Member State to block majority voting if it declares that a proposal is contrary to its national interest.

The use of such measures has also been joined by a wider debate about the future development of the EU. Within the political integration camp one of the more developed arguments has been put forward by Guy Verhofstadt's (at the time Belgium Prime Minister) whose 2005 pamphlet *The United States of Europe, Manifesto for a New Europe* is premised on the belief that EU citizens want the EU to play a greater role. In a speech given at the London School of Economics (LSE) he stated:

'The two contrasting visions of "l'Europe des Nations" of Charles De Gaulle, on the one hand, and a political Union on the other, are simply too far apart. So I think both visions need to be able to co-exist, in a kind of compromise. I know, Europe would comprise two concentric circles: a political core, or 'United States of Europe', based around the euro zone, surrounded by a confederation of countries, or 'Organisation of European States.'<sup>60)</sup>

Interestingly support for the idea of an 'Organisation of European States' can also be found from opponents. Thinking about such a possibility Vaclav Klaus writes: 'It will be necessary to get rid of "Europe-

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this Title shall be taken by the Council acting unanimously. Abstentions by members present in person or represented shall not prevent the adoption of such decisions... [However] if the members of the Council qualifying their abstention in this way represent more than one third of the votes weighted in accordance with Article 205 (2) of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the decision shall not be adopted.' As at fn 57.

60) Speech given at the LSE, UK, 21 March 2006. This can be found at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEPublicLecturesAndEvents/pdf/20060321-Verhofstadt.pdf>.

an Citizenship”. The membership must be motivated only by a common belief in the ability of the member states to act in some areas jointly, in the common interest. The mechanism of decision-making must be consensual, at least in all important matters.’<sup>61)</sup>

#### 4.0. Concluding Remarks

Built on a foundation of peace and prosperity the EU can be deemed to have been a great success that has managed to give something to both those who support the classical goals of political integration and those who don’t. Francis Fukuyama argued that:

‘the European Union more accurately reflects what the world will look like at the end of history than the contemporary United States. The EU’s attempt to transcend sovereignty and traditional power politics by establishing a transnational rule of law is much more in line with a ‘post-historical’ world than the Americans’ continuing belief in God, national sovereignty, and their military.’<sup>62)</sup>

Generally speaking, however, past glories count for little. Today’s need to deliver in a globalised world especially in terms of energy security and environmental issues begs the question: are Member States collectively prepared to countenance political integration as a way of dealing with these issues? If not are we likely to see ‘core groups’ of Member States make increased use of the tools of ‘differentiated integration’ and the EU moving in the direction of a two-speed Europe? In May 2007,

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61) See Vaclav Klaus, ‘ Why Europe must reject centralisation’, *FT.com*, August 29, 2005. <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=Why+Europe+must+reject+centralisation&y=0&a=1&x=0&id=050829006030>. (Accessed June 1, 2007)

62) Quoted on the Economist.com Blog [http://www.economist.com/blogs/certainideasofoeurope/2007/04/fukuyama\\_heart\\_europe.cfm](http://www.economist.com/blogs/certainideasofoeurope/2007/04/fukuyama_heart_europe.cfm). (Accessed April 30, 2007)

for example, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi argued that Member States should start thinking about, 'how to permit countries that want to go forward in the construction of Europe to do so. We don't necessarily have to proceed all together at the same speed.'<sup>63)</sup> Such tools though are not without their problems. Commenting on developments related to Justice and Home Affairs the *European Voice* highlighted the double-edged nature of such opportunities. 'The development of *à la carte* structures might boost EU-wide co-operation in this area, by charting out the ground for common action, or could delay and hamper it.'<sup>64)</sup>

In the summer of 2007 the most immediate issue for the EU concerns the fate of the Constitutional Treaty, something that the proponents of political integration view as vital for the future (collective) development of the EU. The *Berlin Declaration* declared an intention to sort things out by 2009 but it remains to be seen if this is in fact achievable. Barroso adds to the sense of urgency by asking: 'How can we have credibility in addressing global challenges when we show we are not even able to settle our internal arrangements? It's a question of credibility.'<sup>65)</sup> The outcome of the June 21-22, 2007 European Union summit will provide us with further indicators regarding the direction in which events are moving. What seems clear is that the Treaty won't survive in its present form despite the fact that all of the heads of state signed

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63) At the same time he stressed: 'We will make every effort to arrive at a shared solution, and I am sure we will succeed.' This was deemed to be aimed at placating the fears of certain members such as the UK. See 'Prague tempers hostility to EU treaty', *FT.com*, May 2, 2007. [http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?\\_0&aaje=true&x=0&id=070502011370](http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?_0&aaje=true&x=0&id=070502011370). (accessed May 30, 2007) Sarkozy has also given his backing to the idea of a core group (before him Chirac had called for a 'pioneer group') that forges ahead with integration.

64) 'An all-inclusive menu is best for the EU', Editorial, *European Voice*, January 18-24, 2007, p.8

65) 'Barroso warns UK on EU Treaty', *FT.com*, May 31, 2007. As at fn 54.

up for it back in 2004 and 18 Member States subsequently ratified it<sup>66)</sup>. The newly elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy, for example, has gone on record citing support for a mini or simplified treaty<sup>67)</sup>, (a position also favoured by the UK, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and more recently by Italy and Spain) which in the run-up to the summit is clearly gaining momentum. For Fischer as long as ‘...the substance of the Constitution is saved, Europe will have the chance to develop into a global player.’<sup>68)</sup>

So what of the future? Many of the events mentioned in this paper seem to point to the increasing likelihood of heightened tensions between Member States which may manifest itself in calls for a ‘two-speed’ Europe. In the eyes of the proponents of political integration if the views of Jack Straw *et al* were to prevail it would result in a situation whereby the slowest member of the club would be able to dictate the pace of future development. This, they argue, would simply compound the main charge that is levied against the EU namely an ability to deliver. The call by Fischer and Verhofstadt for a ‘multi-speed’ EU that enables some to lead (with the opportunity for others to catch-up) is advanced as a way of offering the chance for the EU to show that it is capable of providing solidarity-based solutions. Without doubt any such movement in this direction is going to cause controversy but it

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66) The Spanish and Luxembourg European Ministers, part of a group deemed ‘the friends of the Constitution’, in a joint statement said ‘We cannot resign ourselves to Europe being no more than a huge market or a free trade area.’ See ‘New Call to Save EU Constitution’, *BBC News website*, January 26, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6300231.stm>. Of the 18 countries that have ratified it Germany and Slovakia are awaiting judgments from their constitutional courts.

67) ‘Sarkozy outlines vision for radical EU reform’, *The Independent*, September 9, 2006, p.30.

68) Joschka Fischer ‘Europe’s Two Futures’. As at fn 52.



may well be the case that both proponents (fearful of grid-lock) and opponents (value the opportunity to opt-out) of political integration end up with a new *mutual accommodation* built upon some form of a two-speed framework. It is clear that the EU means different things to different member states hence ‘differentiated integration’ may well be both the most honest way to move forward as well as offering the best chance to move forward. Of course we may simply end-up with the continuation of the status quo<sup>69)</sup>.

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69) Note, for example, that despite its lack of enthusiasm for the *Berlin Declaration* Poland eventually signed the declaration. President Kaczynski was quoted as saying ‘We have reservations over some parts of the declaration, but if Poland did not sign it, we would be the only EU country not to do so.’ ‘Poll finds 44% think life worse in EU’, *FT.com*, March 18, 2007. See <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=Poll+finds+44%25+think+&y=0&aje=true&x=0&id=070319000852>. (Accessed May 30, 2007)