Politics without frontiers

The role of political parties in Europe's future

Mark Leonard

DEM☺S

DEMOS

Open access. Some rights reserved.

Contents

Note

Europe has been deeply misunderstood–partly because of the jargon and acronyms which surround it. I have attempted to keep jargon to a minimum and have included a glossary of the acronyms which I've been unable to avoid.

Summary

The problem
The EU has maintained peace and boosted prosperity across the continent. But fifty years after the signature of the treaty of Rome, its citizens are at best indifferent and at worst hostile to much of what is done in their name:

- *Disconnected:* Citizens want Europe to step in on the big issues where national political systems are failing – maintaining peace and security, tackling unemployment, international crime and terrorism, and protecting the environment – while Europe's leaders continue to focus on subsidising aimers and a single currency. Only 4 per cent of Europeans see agriculture as a priority, but some 50 per cent of the EU budget and one fifth of all meetings (more than on any other topic) were devoted to agriculture and fisheries last year.
- *Ignorant:* only 2 per cent in the UK claim to know 'a great deal' about the EU, while 73 per cent know 'not very much', or 'nothing at all'.
- *Apathetic:* Turn out in Euro-elections is consistently lower than in national elections, falling with each successive election.

The reason for these gaps between the public and European institutions is the lack of adequate links between decision makers and those affected by decisions. Politicians like to maintain the fiction of parliamentary sovereignty. But in fact:

○ *Legislation* 80 per cent of economic and social legislation and 50 per cent of all legislation across Europe is now decided at an EU level and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) estimates that a third of all UK legislation and 70 per cent of UK business legislation is decided in Brussels.

○ *Ubiquitous:* the EU is involved in every policy area apart from housing, civil liberties and domestic crime.

○ *Dominant:* EU law has precedence over UK law.

○ *Euro-Whitehall:* 20 to 30 per cent of civil service time is now taken up with EU matters, and the Foreign Office, DTI, and Ministry of Agriculture all spend most of their time dealing with European legislation.

But while government has become ever more European, mechanisms of accountability have failed to keep up:

○ *Unaccountable:* British MPs are rarely either interested in (Europe or able to hold ministers to account, and British governments, often agree, behind closed doors, to decisions in Brussels and later treat them as alien intrusions when they are discussed on the floor of the House.

○ *Bureaucratic:* decision making in Europe continues to be dominated by the unelected bureaucrats who negotiate on behalf of member state governments and take 90 per cent of EU decisions within informal policy networks.

○ *Unstrategic:* business, trade unions, local government and social movements have recruited an army of 10,000 lobbyists (twice the number of European Commission administrative officials) to represent them in European meetings so

the European agenda is set by interest groups, not strategic priorities.

○ *Apolitical:* though political parties operate in the European Parliament, the parliament does not set the European agenda, cannot initiate legislation, has no power or sanctions over its executive (the European Council of Ministers), and above all, is isolated from the main levers of power–national governments and the European Council of Ministers.

Why has this failure of accountability arisen? The EU was developed more as a framework for the evasion of responsibility than as a political tool for solving shared problems. Over the years responsibility for heavy and unwieldy industry, agriculture, atomic energy, trade and aid, exchange rates, market regulation and the management of currency have all been dumped on EU institutions. Political parties preferred to avoid close involvement in issues that offered little scope for gaining public support.

What's wrong with conventional solutions?

For many years, it was possible for the EU to sustain this non-partisan, almost apolitical, approach. Political elites refused to acknowledge that there might be a problem. Some saw the EU as no different from other international and 'intergovernmental' organisations, like the UN, or NATO. Others thought that Europe, and European integration, would be best achieved at one step's remove from the public by technocrats.

Today it has become clear that neither intergovernmentalism nor technocracy is adequate for making decisions and mobilising popular support behind them. In either case the gap between citizens and institutions is simply too wide.

Over the last few years, several answers have been proposed. The first answer has been to extend the powers of the European Parliament, with, in addition, more use of referendums, co-operation between national parliaments, and even direct election of a Commission President.

On their own, however, these solutions are not convincing. The European Parliament has not succeeded in establishing itself as an effective channel between ordinary citizens and decision makers. It often appears remote and self-absorbed.

The second answer is to retreat from Europe altogether and to return power to national parliaments. In practice, however, too many areas of social and economic life are transnational for this to be practical, and, in any case the economic and political benefits of European Union are overwhelming.

Why we need multinational parties

The third answer, and the one favoured here, is to match European courts, administration and parliament with European parties. Despite their flaws political parties remain the most effective institutional means for linking people and decision makers. Political parties have consistently shown themselves to be better than the existing European decision making structures at:

- Defining strategic goals
- Projecting an ethos and mission
- Articulating the interests of different social groups
- Implementing policy
- Scrutinising legislation
- Mobilising and communicating with citizens
- Recruiting and developing leaders.

Some would argue that European parties are no longer able to perform these roles, and that they have suffered as acute a decline in legitimacy as European institutions. In fact in many countries parties remain strong and new parties have successfully expressed new social concerns – for example over the environment. Moreover, one of the key reasons why parties may lack legitimacy is that while they are organised at national level, key decisions are taken internationally.

Could parties become multinational? Though politics has been trapped in national cultures for a long time, there have recently been

impressive levels of transnational convergence, and, since 1990 more concerted attempts to coordinate political priorities and activity at a European level:

○ *Same parties:* the same party families are represented in all countries (social democrats, Christian democrats, liberals, greens and so on).
○ *Soul mates:* there has been a marked convergence in parties' philosophies.
○ *Clones:* all European parties have begun to organise and project themselves in a similar way.
○ *Working partners:* parties have developed experience of working together in the European Parliament and European party groups are becoming more coherent and cohesive.
○ *Caucusing:* there has been organised caucusing of party leaders before summit meetings which have bound national parties and governments at a European level.
○ *Cooperation:* Euro-parties have developed transnational manifestos for Euro-elections, policy working groups, and know-how sharing programmes.

Strong European parties will not appear overnight. But, contrary to conventional wisdom, their emergence will not depend upon building a federal Europe or instigating massive change to EU institutions. There are things that can be done now:

○ *Serious programme:* parties could develop serious strategic programmes at an EU level.
○ *Binding programme:* they could make programmes adopted at congresses binding on national parties.
○ *Party seating:* ministers could sit in council meetings according to party-alignment rather than alphabetical order.
○ *Brussels-based ministers:* governments could have national ministers for European Affairs based in Brussels.

- ○ *Political education:* set up a legislative training college for all MPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates to educate them about EU decision making.
- ○ *Accountability:* require Ministers and COREPER officials to appear in front of parliamentary committees.
- ○ *Teaching Europe:* change the National Curriculum to include an EU demerit.

What will multinational parties look like?

The USA arid India provide the most relevant models for forming a European transnational party system. They show that the two biggest challenges are to get voters to think multinationally and to persuade politicians to operate at a multinational level. If a party is to succeed at a transnational level, it must obey the following maxims:

- ○ *Pork for the people:* deliver tangible benefits for the public at a local level.
- ○ *Jobs for the boys and girls:* create a transnational career structure.
- ○ *Coherent ethos:* develop a coherent ethos and a recognisable ideological brand name.
- ○ *Flexible friends:* be flexible enough to deal with asymmetric shocks.

If Euro-parties are to succeed they must learn these lessons but will also need:

- ○ *A single membership* so that people can join and communicate directly.
- ○ *A single budget* so that they are financially secure.
- ○ *A single spokesperson* to front the party in the media, though they could have different leaders of the party in different fora.

- ○ *A single strategic programme,* though they will not depend on a unified election system and should be able to supplement the programme with local commitments.
- ○ *To use new technology* and take advantage of their size to develop radical new means of communication and rich programmes of activity: from Internet question time to international house-swapping schemes.

None of these is impractical, certainly if we look at a five to twenty year time scale. Europeans are becoming more at ease with each others cultures, media and lifestyles. Many of the big problems faced in different countries are now remarkably similar. In the economy and culture the world long ago transcended national boundaries. In our systems of governance too, power has moved beyond frontiers; The time has now come for politics without frontiers.

Introduction

For many years, there has been a growing gap between the increasingly
I global nature of business and culture and political systems which
remain resolutely national. This pamphlet is about how that gap can be
bridged.

It argues that the structures of the European Union are not just a
means of securing a single market or common standards. They are also,
rightly, political means for solving shared problems. Yet, at the moment,
they remain strangely divorced from the normal mechanisms of politi-
cal life. Despite direct elections to the European Parliament, citizens do
not feel connected to the decisions made in their name at a European
level, if they know about them at all. The debate and competition
between alternative visions of the future which is at the heart of any
healthy polity is either non-existent or dangerously distorted. So, while
the power and significance of the EU has grown steadily, forcing legis-
lation, business and social movements to become multinational,
European politics and political parties have remained overwhelmingly
national in their thinking and their organisation.

The facts
- EU law has precedence over national law, provides over half
  of all national legislation (and 80 per cent of economic and
  social legislation) and impinges on virtually all policy areas.

○ Up to one third of civil service time is spent dealing with EU matters and all government departments have a Euro-focus.
○ Business, trade unions and social movements have developed multinational organisations, work hard to attract European money and employ over 10,000 lobbyists to fight for their interests in Brussels.
○ Yet, political parties and politicians think and act exclusively in national terms.

Why?

Why did this apparent imbalance between national politics and European decision making emerge? The answer is that EU institutions weren't designed to solve problems but to avoid them. They were developed to allow nation states to shift responsibility for the jobs that had to be done but that no one wanted to do. Suddenly, it became possible to hide the unpalatable expenses of government – like paying tax to keep food prices high or pouring money into dying industries – as well to hive off worthy but unexciting tasks to a new tier of bureaucracy. The EU rapidly developed into an alibi for the unpopular decisions of government, encapsulated in the politician's plea to the public, 'It wasn't us, it was Brussels.'

The price of this evasion has been a party political vacuum at the heart of the EU and a European vacuum in the heart of political parties. As the EU was not designed to accommodate political parties it is now difficult for them to get involved. The party-shaped hole has been filled by bureaucratic structures designed to create technocratic policies.

The protracted absence of political parties has created a politics which is:

○ *Undemocratic.* There is no bridge between European decision makers and citizens: 90 per cent of European decisions are taken by national civil servants.
○ *Unreal.* We falsely talk and think about our politics in national terms when 50 per cent of all legislation is decided in Brussels.

○   *Unaccountable.* National governments are not held to account for their activities in Brussels: decisions are taken behind closed doors and national parliaments fail to monitor their activities.

○   *Unstrategic.* European decision making is fragmented and sectoral as the agenda is set by interest groups rather than by strategic planning.

○   *Unwanted.* People don't get what they want out of Europe. Its objectives are technocratic rather than a reflection oft popular demands. For example, 50 per cent of the budget is spent on agriculture, although only 8 per cent of people across Europe see it as a priority.

○   *Unpopular.* There have been no serious attempts by national political parties to mobilise public support for the EU or to explain its relevance–it is just used as a political football.

Solutions

In this pamphlet I set out a range of solutions to the core problem for Europe today, which, I argue, is not primarily a democratic deficit but rather a political deficit. I will 3how why, despite their flaws, political parties will play a decisive role in enabling Europe to evolve and I will show how they need to change in order to perform this role. But first, why is it that a purely national politics is becoming obsolete?

Why do we need multinational politics?

Trends towards transnationalisation

It has become fashionable to downplay the trends towards globalisation. The period before 1914 saw globalisation increase as rapidly as the 1980s and 1990s, with the Gold Standard, the spread of the telegraph and the steamship acting as globalising forces at least as powerful as satellites and computers.[1]

But no observer of the modern world can fail to be impressed by the sheer speed with which a globalised economy is taking shape. Though rarely without a national base, many multinational companies are truly internationalised: the world's 100 largest non-financial corporations have 40 per cent ($1.2 trillion) of their assets, sales and profits in foreign locations. Since the 1960s, growth in world trade has consistently exceeded increases in world output and foreign direct investment has grown even faster. The World Bank estimates that sales by foreign subsidiaries of multinational companies may now exceed the world's total exports.[2] Meanwhile, one day's world trade in 'forex' typically involves $1.3 trillion while the entire foreign currency reserves of governments in the West amount to only $60 billion.[3] Indeed, the total stack of financial assets traded in the world's capital markets increased from $5 trillion in 1980 to $35 trillion in 1992–equivalent to twice the collective GDP of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. By the year 2000, it will have risen to over $80 trillion – three times the OECD countries' GDP.[4]

Nor is globalisation restricted to economics. Civil society is global-ising in its trail. The sight of a McDonalds in every town, a Spice Girls CD in every stereo, a Levi's ad in every cinema and a baseball cap on every teenager's head is testimony to a unique explosion in the volume and intensity of cultural traffic. Music, film and television markets are experiencing high levels of international penetration – me afterbirth of a global teen-culture. It is true that similar things were said about Coca Cola in the 1950s, but today international penetration has spread far wider and is no longer restricted to big brand names. International telephone calls are increasing by 30 per cent a year, while traffic on the Internet is growing even faster.[5] A very different example is the bur-geoning fraternity of transnational pressure groups and international nongovernmental! organisations, which have grown in number from 176 in 1909 to 4,262 in 1989.[6] Perhaps the clearest example of the new world in which both economic and civil activity have gone global was the contest in the mid 1990s over the Brent Spar oil rig, fought out between Greenpeace, a voluntary organisation with offices in 30 coun-tries, and Shell International, a multinational company with outlets in 100 countries. National governments and political parties looked on uncomfortably from the sidelines.

While globalisation has been driven forward by many factors, including technology and market forces, there have also been internal dynamics at work. Once one sector goes global, others have to follow suit. For example, as business has internationalised itself, governments have felt the need to create new institutions to deal with them, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT–Now the World Trade Organisation (WTO)), the Universal Postal Union or the International Telecommunications Union[7] and these have, in turn become the focus for lobbying by business.

In the same way the growth of international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Re-construction and Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have created a new tier of subsidies and grants. This, in turn, has encouraged, campaigns

and voluntary organisations to go global, too. For example, the munif-icent finance offered by programmes such as the Poland and Hungary aid for economic restructuring (PHARE), the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth (TACIS) aid programmes for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the European Development Fund for the Third World have quickly elicited a response from local authorities and non-profit organisations which have begun to organise at an international level.

Party politics trails behind

At times, political parties have also tried to internationalise them-selves. The main party families all have international umbrella groups. The Socialists led the way well over 100 years ago. Much more recently, Liberal, Christian Democratic and Conservative Internationals have also been established. The most spectacular attempts to create interna-tional political bodies capable of exerting real influence were the First and Second Socialist Internationals in the nineteenth and early twenti-eth centuries. The failure of the Second International to stop the First World War was, however, probably the last death-throe of meaningful party organisation at a global level. The current internationals are toothless consultative bodies whose prime locus, the cynics would argue, is junketing. They do not even act as custodians of an ethos, let alone undertake policy formulation or serious debate.

Is Europe a response to globalisation?

European institutions have an ambivalent place in this story and there are very different views about whether the EU represents a force for globalisation or a means of resisting it.

For those who regard the EU as a staging post to an integrated world, concrete proof that it is a harbinger of globalisation came with its efforts to complete the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations in 1993. It was possible to reach an agreement largely because the European Union negotiated as a unit and showed itself willing and able to take on a global leadership role. Since Marrakesh in 1994,

things have moved on under the auspices of the WTO. For domestic reasons the United States was reluctant to conclude as comprehensive an agreement as was sought by most of the other participants. At any other time, if a global player like the US decided it did't want to play, the negotiations would have collapsed. Instead, the EU played a key role in extending trade and opening up markets by mobilising Asia and Latin America to set up a deal. Peter Sutherland, former Director of the GATT, has even gone so far as to claim, 'We wouldn't have a WTO if the European Union did not have a common commercial policy and did not negotiate with one voice.'[8] The EU's efforts to oppose the US Helms-Burton measures represent further proof the EU's liberalising and globalising credentials.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), industrial policies like ESPRIT, and the anti-dumping and restrictive trade clauses in agreements with Central and Eastern Europe are, by contrast, better understood as examples of protectionist and anti-competitive measures implemented, cynics would argue, in the creation of a 'fortress Europe'.

The truth is that the EU is at once a liberaliser, globaliser and a force to protect the rights, social conditions and political freedoms unique to Europe. The Social Chapter, for example, offsets the monetarist ethos of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the European Single Market. Indeed, throughout its history Europe has played a double role, seeking to manage wider trade and exchange while also delivering security.

Rather than being an agent of globalisation or a defence against it, the EU can be best understood as an experiment in creating new institutions to maximise the benefits of more open borders and contain their costs. Indeed, as the world's largest market (twice the size of Japan and larger than the United States) and largest exporter and importer (responsible for 25 per cent of world trade), with 50 years' experience of cooperating, pooling sovereignty and coordinating policy, the EU represents an unparalleled test of how government and politics can do more than simply react as other spheres of activity go global. If politics can be transnationalised anywhere it is within the EU.

Europe today – what needs to be done?

How has the EU developed into what it now is?

The paradox is that, despite its power, the EU remains unable to make demands on its citizens–such as to pay taxes or go to war. In economic terms it is a lion, but, politically, it is something of a mouse.

The history of the European Union explains how this has come about. Its institutions are the result of the progressive development, by national governments, of a regulatory framework that allows them to shift responsibility for their dirty and boring work to a European level. By dirty work, I mean problems so overwhelming that the nation state cannot deal with them alone. By boring, I mean low salience issues which require technocratic solutions–not the things that win elections.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, overwhelming problems were many. It became clear that to deal with them effectively, Europe's resources would have to be pooled. The most pressing task was reintegrating a shamed Germany into the world of civilised nations in a non-threatening ways and ending the causes of repeated war in Europe.[9] But, at the same time, the threadbare and war-damaged European infrastructures and economies had to be regenerated in a coordinated manner, if the Marshall moneys were not to be squandered. This quest to secure peace and prosperity by integrating technocracy became the hallmark of European integration over the following half century. The founding fathers' architecture for the new

European Community was not initially a blueprint for a 'United States of Europe'–more a glorified dump for unwanted policy decisions.[10]

The process began with the establishment, in 1951, of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). This embryonic EU was designed to prop up and depoliticise the expensive, heavy industries that formed the heart of Europe's economy–hardly the sort of organisation to command political loyalty. Between 1952 and 1954, there was a brief foray beyond the narrow confines of technocracy as member states sought to tackle the problem of peace and security explicitly by establishing a European Defence Community–complete with a single European Army. The plan eventually collapsed when the French Parliament refused to ratify it. The result of the eleventh hour failure was a resolution not to tackle high salience issues again. Peace and security were, from then on, to be guaranteed simply by the Community's existence rather than by its actions.

In line with the decision to restrict unification to more manageable areas, negotiations began at Messina, in 1955, for a Common External Tariff (CET) which paved the way for the Treaty of Rome formally establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957–58. Despite its grandiose name this represented no more than a new name for the same set of concerns. The new treaty extended the ECSC's commitment to heavy industry to other expensive and unmanageable national preoccupations. The cost of an ailing, uncompetitive and widespread peasantry was shared by all member states, through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the vast expense of developing a nuclear energy capability was spread through EURATOM.

In 1963, the French, suffering from the burden of their colonial past, managed to make the EEC Collectively responsible for maintaining trade and aid links with their former colonies through the signature of the Yaoundé convention. When the UK finally made it into the Community in 1973, it too wanted to dump some of its burdens. It lobbied for the Lomé Convention, signed in 1976, which extended EC responsibility to former British colonies as well as French ones.

In 1979, following the havoc wreaked on European economies by the oil crisis and the emergence of global currency markets, the EEC

established the European Monetary System (EMS), incorporating the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), which allows member states to palm off responsibility for difficult decisions about currencies. Even the establishment of direct elections for the European Parliament (in the same year) was less a concession to democratic politics than a means of legitimising technocratic operations. The continued preponderance of technocracy became clear in 1985 when a re-invigorated Community pressed ahead with the creation of the Single European Market – a measure that had been envisaged by the founding fathers. The Cockfield White Paper and the Single European Act which set the scene for the '1992 Programme' brought the Community to new heights of activity, forcing through hundreds of technical directives and regulations to replace conflicting national rules.

The original vision of guaranteeing peace and security through technocratic measures held true when the political geography of Europe began to change. When Spain and Portugal overthrew dictatorships and applied to join the club, EEC member states effectively decided to buy themselves security by allowing them to join and massively expanded the Community's budget to provide development aid for the new arrivals. And, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, an aid fund for the Soviet Union was established, so that member states could share the burden of propping up and containing their unwieldy neighbour.

Maastricht almost embodied this pattern of European integration. The treaty set up a clear, ambitious and supranational programme for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) which, like the EMS, will allow member states to shift responsibility for unpopular and difficult economic decisions to a European level. But at the same time, it failed to establish an institutional architecture capable of dealing with high-salience challenges such as developing a convincing defence or foreign policy (for instance, on Bosnia) under the second pillar or agreeing a framework to deal with international crime and freedom of movement under pillar three. Again, the EU showed clarity of purpose and determination in dealing with technocratic issues and an unwillingness to tackle high salience issues in an effective way. The extreme emphasis on constitutional niceties at the Amsterdam Intergovernmental

Figure 1. Passing the buck: a brief European chronology

1951	European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) treaty sighed
1952—54	**European Defence Community negotiations (EDC)**
1955	Messina negotiations for Common Market
1957	**Treaty of Rome and Euratom**
1963	Veto of UK accession; Yaoundé convention
1965—66	**De Gaulle's empty chair crisis followed by the 'Luxembourg Compromise'**
1973	The UK, Ireland and Denmark join the EEC
1976	**Lomé Convention is signed**
1979	EP direct elections; EMS is established
1981	**Greece joins the EC**
1985—86	Cockfield White Paper and Single European Act
1986	**Spain and Portugal join the EC**
1988	Delors I budget
1990	**Capital movement liberalisation, first stage of EMU land EU aid to Soviet Union**
1991	Maastricht Treaty
1992	**Delors II budget and the Edinburgh Growth Initiative**
1995	Sweden, Austria and Finland join the EU

Conference (IGC) to the exclusion even of preparations for enlargement were further instances of this pattern.

Because the driving force of European integration has so often been the evasion of responsibility, political parties did not get involved – they wanted to keep their noses clean. As a result, political parties have been slow to move their activities beyond the nation state. Between 1951 and 1979, there was practically no party involvement at a European level. There were no elections to the European Parliament to contest and, before 1975, there were no regular summits to set strategic priorities for the Union. This made it impossible for leaders to devise a party line on the big issues of the day. This has gradually begun to change. Since 1979, there have been direct elections to the European Parliament and, since 1990, regular meetings of Party leaders and caucusing before

summits. More recently, even Commissioners have occasionally held party caucusing before important Commission meetings. Yet, the involvement of parties has been slow and is, even today, far from complete.

The jealousy of national parliaments has also played a part in stunting the development of a genuine European parliament and political system. National governments – relishing their existing lack of accountability to the national parliaments – were keen to avoid the establishment of a new body that might have succeeded in holding them to account. Political parties themselves have also contributed to the process as they felt they had a vested interest in keeping things parochial and more manageable. This was illustrated in a speech by Lord Tebbit who argued against British membership of the EU on the grounds that it would destroy the Conservative Party.[11] Divisions at a European level have therefore predominantly been between pro- and anti-integrationists rather than between left and right.

The absence of political parties has led to the development of a decision making process that is bureaucratic, technical and closed. The structures that were constructed fit this mould – they enshrine a democratic deficit. Discussion is focused on regulation, dominated by horse-trading, and most decisions are taken by national civil servants. The lack of openness and accountability has opened the way for governments to play an insidious double game of agreeing to unpopular but necessary measures in Brussels, and attacking them as alien intrusions when they need to be implemented. There is a clear link between the actors involved and the politics they produce.

Figure 2. Political systems and their outcomes

Type of politics	Agents	Motivation	Influences	Outcome
Parliamentary	Political parties	Ideological	Popular concerns	High salience
Corporatist	Social partners	Financial gain	Membership's demands	Medium salience
Bureaucratic	Civil servants	Stability	Lobbying networks	Technocratic

The myth of national politics: the UK goes European

The EU has consistently been used to deal with difficult and unpopular issues. But confusion over its merits has also been worsened by a deliberate obfuscation of its real role, as politicians have sought to hold onto the pretence of national parliamentary sovereignty.

In fact parliamentary sovereignty has been terminally undermined as a principle and as a practice. The long established supremacy of European Community law over British law was graphically illustrated in a recent set of cases over Spanish 'quota-hopping'. When the cases eventually reached the House of Lords, Lord Bridge made the relationship more explicit than ever before:

> 'Some public comments on the decision of the Court of Justice … have suggested that this was a novel and dangerous invasion by a Community institution of the sovereignty of the United Kingdom Parliament. But such comments are based on a misconception … The supremacy within the European Community of Community law over the national law of member states was … certainly well established … long before the United Kingdom joined the Community. Thus, whatever limitation of its sovereignty, Parliament accepted was entirely voluntary.'[12]

Later in the case, Lord Bridge even said that all UK law – past, present and future – should be read as if it had a postscript stating that it will be 'enacted subject to directly applicable Community law'.

Indeed, the scope of national sovereignty has been diminished to such an extent that there are only three areas of policy where the EU has virtually no involvement: housing, domestic crime and civil liberties. As a result of these changes, the volume of legislation which comes exclusively from the nation state has shrunk dramatically. Jacques Delors famously predicted that one day 80 per cent of economic and social legislation would come from Brussels. This was dismissed

as fanciful at the time, but we are now approaching these levels. A recent House of Commons EU Scrutiny report showed that both Philippe Séguin (President of French Parliament) and Rita Fussmuth (former Bundestag President) estimated that 80 per cent of economic and social law and 50 per cent of all law comes from Brussels.[13] Even the British DTI admits that 70 per cent of business legislation and one third of all UK law comes from Brussels.[14]

It is, however, important to remember that the Eurosceptic spectre of the Commission making law is misconceived. The UK government makes laws in Brussels in conjunction with the other member states. Although more decisions are now taken with majority voting, national governments still have a veto in the most important areas. As the Amsterdam IGC has shown, this is unlikely to alter very much in the foreseeable future.

Euro-Whitehall

When legislation becomes internationalised, so must the policy devisers. An estimated 20 to 30 percent of the entire civil service's time is

Figure 3. Who does what?[15]

Extensive EU involvement	Policy responsibility shared between the EU and member states	Limited EU policy involvement	Virtually no EU policy involvement
Trade, Agriculture, Fishing, Market regulation	Regional, Competition, Industrial, Foreign, Monetary, Environmental, Equal opportunities, Working conditions, Consumer protection, Movement across external borders, Energy, Transport, Macroeconomics, Combating terrorism and drugs, Pensions	Health, Education, Defence, International Crime, Social welfare	Housing, Civil liberties, Domestic crime

spent on Europe.[16] Every day, hundreds of telegrams go backwards and forwards between the European Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, government departments and the United Kingdom Representation to the European Union (UKREP). Every week there are twenty ministerial visits to Brussels, while Sir Stephen Wall, the British Permanent Representative in Brussels, returns to London each week to brief ministers, including the Prime Minister. Every two weeks 10 to 20 per cent of civil servants also make the trek to Brussels to negotiate on European working gruops.[17] Then they must implement the results.

The role of the Foreign Office (FCO) has radically changed as the EU has grown in importance. Ninety per cent of London based FCO staff now deal with EU matters.[18] As one former FCO civil servant said, `There is a feeling in the foreign office that nothing moves without first going through a European filter–there is almost no area of policy that doesn't have a European dimension.'[19] Other Whitehall departments are similarly affected: virtually no agricultural policy is purely British and the majority of DTI time is devoted to EU matters. All departments now have European legal advisers to deal with the growing number of cases going to the European Court of Justice.

The amount of time spent by civil servants in negotiations in Brussels has fundamentally altered their relations with other member states. Civil servants from across the EU form social as well as professional links. Twenty years ago, policy in other member states was considered a 'foreign' issue to be discovered via the FCO or via the national embassy. Today, civil servants simply ring up their opposite numbers in the civil service of the countries concerned. The level of contact is so intense and so time consuming that there has been serious talk among FCO officials about moving some of the Departmental offices to Brussels.[20] This is beginning to happen in a modest way with the secondment of departmental officials to the UK delegation in Brussels.[21] Some officials, who spend up to three days a week in Brussels, are even considering moving to Northern France – half way between Brussels and London.[22] Our ministers and civil servants seem to be quite literally 'going native'.

Very British MPs

The contrast with parliament could not be more stark. In the last parliament, MPs split into a minority of tireless ideologues and a large majority of victims of 'Euro-narcolepsy'. The result was a startling ignorance of the European legislative process, irrational hostility to other countries and a failure to hold ministers and civil servants accountable for their activities in Brussels.

The ignorance of European decision making procedures among many MPs is stunning. It is still commonplace to hear of British MPs visiting EU institutions claiming that the European Commission *makes* legislation.[23] During the last parliament, a large scale ESRC and University of Sheffield survey of MPs' attitudes to Europe revealed a lack of awareness of what membership of the EU entails. Although practically no Conservative MPs and 7 per cent of Labour MPs believed that Britain should withdraw from the European Union, many supported policies for the future which are fundamentally incompatible with EU membership.[24] Thus, half of Tory MPs and one fifth of Labour MPs expressed support for an Act of Parliament to establish the supremacy of Westminster over EU legislation which, in practical terms, is tantamount to withdrawal from the EU; 62 per cent of Tory MPs and 30 per cent of Labour MPs did not agree that sovereignty can be pooled; over half of Tory MPs saw the European Court of Justice as a threat to British liberty; and almost half of Tory MPs claimed that the establishment of a European currency would signal the end of the UK as a sovereign nation – strange views for people who professed to believe in European Union.

In spite of the high profile Europe achieved at Prime Minister's Question Time in the last parliament, it was virtually invisible in the mass of Commons business: less than 4 per cent of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) and less than 2 per cent of Early Day Motions (EDMs) were on Europe, and almost half of MPs did not bother to sign a single motion on Europe.[25] Even more surprising is that only 7.5 per cent of MPs take up their free EU funded trip to Brussels every year–illustrating that even Belgian restaurants, chocolates and beer (and a free lunch) are not enough to kindle any enthusiasm for Europe amongst most politicians.[26]

Figure 4. MPs' attitudes to Europe[27]

Statement	Respondent	Agree %	Disagree %	Neither %
1. Sovereignty cannot be pooled	Tory MP	62	31	7
	Lab MP	30	59	11
2. An Act of Parliament should be passed to establish the ultimate supremacy of parliament over EU legislation	Tory MP	50	33	17
	Lab MP	18	64	18
3. Britain should withdraw from the European Union	Tory MP	*	*	*
	Lab MP	7	90	3
4. The continental system of jurisprudence as practised by the European Court of Justice is a threat to liberty in Britain	Tory MP	55	26	19
	Lab MP	10	64	26
5. The establishment of a single EU currency would signal the end of the UK as a sovereign nation	Tory MP	48	41	11
	Lab MP	21	74	5
6. The globalisation of economic activity makes European Union (EU) membership more rather than less necessary for the UK	Tory MP	62	30	8
	Lab MP	83	14	3
7. The Conservative/Labour Party's association with the EPP/PES is more of a political liability than an asset	Tory MP	36	44	20
	Lab MP	12	78	10

* The surveyors failed to identify anyone who supported this proposition at the time of the survey and therefore did not put the question.

Perhaps the most striking failure of our political system has been the doublespeak of our politicians. In the last parliament, ministers pretended to be stupefied when legislation that they had agreed to in Brussels only a few weeks earlier reached the floor of the House of Commons. This was dramatically illustrated in debates about the Working Time Directive. With a general election approaching, John Major's administration lodged a case in the European Court of Justice challenging the legal base of the directive, and when the matter was raised in the! House of Commons, John Major spiritedly declared his objections to the 'principle [of] working conditions being dictated from Brussels when they should be determined here, in this House',.[28] This was in spite of the fact that, in 1992, when the proposals were discussed at the Council of Ministers the government had boasted it had 'secured all its key objectives' and did not vote against them.[29]

Backbench MPs have conspired in the process by presenting the debate in surprisingly primitive terms. Sovereignty was invariably seen as an indivisible and zero-sum concept, rather than a flexible and positive-sun) concept. It is never 'pooled', but always 'sacrificed' or 'abandoned', and any attempts to share it were always 'the thin end of the wedge',.[30] There was little talk of actual control or influence in the world, but an obsession with formal legally held power. This was expressed in various slogans deployed by Eurosceptics and Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, and encapsulated in the question, 'Who governs Britain, Brussels or Westminster?',[31] There has been a collective inability in the political class to answer the question truthfully and admit that Westminster, local government *and* Brussels are all running the country.

Pro-Europeans have often been as guilty as their sceptical counterparts of deploying and institutionalising a vocabulary that does not reflect their real opinions. Arguments for further integration have seldom, if ever, been made on their own merits. Far from the ringing endorsement you would expect from self-proclaimed 'enthusiasts', one discovers that integration is usually desirable to prevent Britain from being 'marginalised'.[32] It is the 'least worst' option. It (must be done 'because all the other parties in Europe support it'.[33] At their most

lyrical pro-Europeans have simply reeled off a stream of dates from Messina to Schengen and repeated the mantra: 'we dragged our feet then and we regretted it later, so we'd better sign up now.'

No scrutiny please – we're British!

> 'A process of permanent parliamentary debate, permanent parliamentary scrutiny and occasional parliamentarly hysteria is not always in the national interest.'
> *Kenneth Clarke MP, 25 November 1996*[34]

Prime Minister's Question Time, Foreign Office Questions and Parliamentary Questions can provide only minimal accountability for goings-on in Brussels. Though there is a real attempt in the House of Commons and House of Lords European Legislation Committees to read auditors' reports and examine some of the directives and regulations, this provides little help as the committee reports are largely ignored. In fact, less than half of the 108 reports on EU matters produced by committees of the Commons and the Lords were ever even mentioned on the floor of either House.[35] The contrast with the Swedish model where the ministers negotiating at the IGC gave weekly progress reports to Swedish MPs could not be more graphic.

The result of this process has been a basic acceptance in the House of Commons, in parliamentary rhetoric and among the public that decisions taken in Brussels are beyond the control of national politicians. They are seen as part of 'international relations', the preserve of diplomats, rather than as an arm of government – the realm of party politics. British ministers – during the Thatcher and Major years – were among the most stubborn defenders of the practice of the Council of Ministers to meet behind closed doors. This allowed them to keep their backbenchers, and the public, in the dark as to how Europeanised they had become, preventing proper accountability to the House of Commons. This lack of accountability can be explained in part by rampant Euroscepticism on the Tory back benches in the last parliament,

but the real cause has been backbench MPs' ignorance of European procedures and their unwillingness to dig any deeper. The recent influx of younger, more open MPs is a: positive sign, but it cannot make a difference unless it is supplemented with a basic knowledge of European decision making procedures. This is particularly important given that the public, who understand even less, have exercised no pressure on their representatives to find out more. Unless this takes place rapidly, the British Parliament will have effectively abandoned the scrutiny of government activities that produce up to half of our legislation.

So, if national parliaments are providing inadequate scrutiny, is this made up for at a European level?

The myth of European politics: politicians as glorified technocrats

'Political parties at a European level are an important factor for integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of citizens of the Union.'
Article 138a, Treaty of the European Union, Maastricht 1991

Superficially, at least, parties have already developed a multinational dimension. This was originally forced on them by the establishment, in 1954, of the Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community. The skeletal bodies this produced were eventually strengthened into confederations in preparation for the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979. After the Maastricht Treaty gave political parties a place in the hallowed world of Euro-treaties, the federations were transformed into 'political parties'. There are now four transnational political parties in Europe. The three main party families (Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Liberals) are represented by the European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR).

The established groups were joined, in 1984, by the European Federation of Green Parties (EFGP), dedicated to establishing 'a European House built on ecological, democratic, social and pacifist principles'.

As so often in the European Union, the grand words of treaty language belie a very different reality. EU decision making is strangely apolitical and continues to be dominated by unelected bureaucrats. But, contrary to the Eurosceptic charge, it is *national* bureaucrats who play this role, not the employees of the European Commission who are notably thin on the ground.

The Commission's role in EU legislation is merely to table draft proposals, after consulting with relevant interests, and subsequently to ensure that the legislation is properly implemented by the member states. The decisions are formally taken by the Council of Ministers, but they delegate at least 90 per cent of their work to a dense network of working parties made up of national civil servants. These national civil servants and the powerful Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), made up of national ambassadors to the EU which meets weekly in Brussels, make decisions on the less contentious issues and pre-cook the agenda for every meeting of the Council of Ministers.

They divide the agenda into two sections: 'A' points (included only for information and for formal approval), and 'B' points (where there is serious disagreement between member states at civil servant level). Even the 'B' points are only discussed in general terms by the Council, and then referred back to the working groups to sort out the details. So ministers are not party to the vast majority of decisions. The same procedure applies to meetings of the European Council–the twice-yearly summit meetings of heads of government. Moist of their time is taken up discussing foreign policy and institutional issues. They are seldom called upon to adjudicate disputes over legislation, and then usually because a single member state has been holding out against a consensus in the relevant Council of Ministers. When this happens a compromise is normally sought and, if it is reached, the formal decision will subsequently be made at the appropriate Council.

There are two quite different dynamics in the decision making process. Commentators describe them as low politics versus high

politics or informal versus formal politics. The level of low politics takes place in informal meetings, the players are civil servants and lobbyists. The level of high politics involves strategic policy setting. It is confined to meetings of the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the Intergovernmental Conferences. Its players are politicians, its structures are formal and it is seen as the EU's political arena.

How are most decisions taken?

As we have seen, 90 per cent of decisions are taken at the level of informal politics (COREPER and working group meetings).[36] The subject matter is extremely technocratic–decisions are taken on the composition of tomato paste, the length of cut flowers, the size of meshes on fishing nets, etc. It follows a classical bureaucratic model of decision making. Decisions are arrived at consensually within 'policy networks'. The Commission is almost uniquely open to approaches from lobbying groups. As a small bureaucracy, it is forced to turn to organised interests and national experts for technical expertise. This receptiveness has been reflected in the Commission's formal consultation structures: for example, 30 of the 56 seats on the EU's Committee for Commerce and Distribution are allocated to the Confédération Européenne de Commerce et de Detail, the umbrella group representing retailers. The picture is complicated further by the bizarre dual role of national ministers and their civil servants. Ministers in their domestic roles are targets for lobbyists, but when in Brussels, they metamorphose into a breed of super-lobbyists with contacts and resources beyond the grasp of ordinary lobbying companies. In their efforts to defend the 'national interest', ministers and their civil servants spend much of their time lobbying the Commission and other member states on behalf of organised interests in their own countries.

Though many decisions taken at this level are mundane, some have massive repercussions. The most flagrant example of civil servants taking important decisions is in the preparations for the Budget Council. The budget must be voted on line by line and the vast majority

of decisions are taken by a specialised working group that is a hybrid of civil servants and ministers. The committee is charged with reducing 1,200 pages of 6,000 lines to a fraction of that in only a few days.[37] Normally working groups don't vote, only ministers vote. Not only does this committee vote, but it does so as soon as there is a (qualified) majority. Civil servants are effectively wielding political power behind closed doors. The Monetary Committee is another example of civil servants wielding power and influence. They too are out of the public eye and actually have the power to alter exchange rates. A final example is the Veterinary Committee of so-called senior civil servants who dealt with the BSE crisis and caused a political storm.

What happens in the 'political' domain?

One need only look at the wranglings at Amsterdam to see that even when things become contentious, the locus of disagreement is not the traditional stamping ground for party politicians. The hotly contested areas of debate were the minutiae of institutional procedure. The agenda was unintelligible to anyone not fluent in Eurospeak, and unexciting even to those who are: should the Commission be reduced in size? Should the votes on the Council of Ministers be reweighted? Should there be a flexibility clause? And how much should pillars two and three be integrated into pillar one? The debate was polarised, but not along party lines. The major players lined up behind positions, according either to their standing on integration or according to domestic political considerations.

The result of this process is a cosy, cosmopolitan, international network of policy makers. National politicians and civil servants are effectively reduced to the role of lobbyists representing narrow sectoral interests rather than outlining a strategic programme for government. The irony of the situation is that the Commission, the actual bureaucracy, is relied on for vision by the member states. One need only sit in on a meeting of a working party, COREPER or the Council of Ministers to see the 'vision' role played by the Commission. It is a miracle that Commissioners and members of the Commission staff

have so consistently lived up to their solemn declarations to become 'the conscience of the community'. In a typical meeting the Commission outlines proposals in the general interests of the European Union, which representatives of member states whittle away at until they reach a compromise. Member states frequently look to the Commission for strategic leadership to prevent the discussions from getting bogged down.

Things are beginning to change. A third European Party system has gradually developed around pre-summit meetings for party leaders. Since the preparations for the negotiation and ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the Council has gradually supplemented its role as a forum for thrashing out national differences with a party dimension. During IGCs, meetings of leaders of the European federations became the main arenas for developing policy. Simon Hix identified the EPP party leaders' summit in Rome in October 1990 as the turning point in this process.[38] Prior to the summit the Christian Democrat leaders worked together to resist the British government and press for a strict timetable for EMU. The use of qualified majority voting on the Council meant that their programme was accepted in its entirety, leaving Margaret Thatcher complaining that she was 'ambushed'.[39] The PES felt similarly ambushed and formalised their own structures from then onwards. An indication of the growing importance of these meetings is that while only a third of leaders attended them in the early 1980s (sending deputies or international secretaries instead) they are now attended by 95 per cent of leaders.[40] In fact these meetings have been so successful that Ruari Quinn, deputy leader of the Irish Labour Party, is leading demands for the PES to organise similar meetings with departmental ministers.

There is still a long way to go. The arguments over the Employment Chapter at Amsterdam, the Social Chapter at Maastricht, and Delors' neo-Keynesian budget at the Edinburgh Summit in 1992 were well publicised examples of the Council splitting on party lines, but these party-political divisions must be seen against a background of ideological collusion. In fact, the limited party activity at European level has been directed more at socialising anti-European parties than outlining a coherent agenda (see below). What was remarkable about

the Social Chapter was its acceptance across the whole political spectrum–only the French National Front and the British Conservatives rejected it. Compared to the debate in Britain, where the Maastricht Treaty was viewed by the extreme left as a monetarist capitalist conspiracy and by! the extreme right as a sustained attack on the British way of life, political debate in the European Council is consensual. The fact that not a single political party objected to the economic ethos of Maastricht reveals how trivial 'political' disagreements were. In fact the debate never even took off. Figures were plucked out of the air (3 per cent, 60 per cent and so on) largely to exclude certain member states–and positions on the convergence criteria hardened immediately. The choice was being pro-European and accepting the figures or quibbling with them and being anti-European–there was no discussion of the socioeconomic ramifications. So, even at the highest level, party politics is usually put on ice.

Isn't the European Parliament the party political dimension?

It is generally argued that it is proper that the European Council, IGCs and the Council of Ministers focus on national differences, as the European Parliament is the forum for political parties. Decision making in the European Parliament is an unmistakably political process. Parties are in the driving seat–setting the agenda, fixing votes and organising MEPs. The parliamentary offices, committee chairmanships and speaking time are all allocated in strict proportion to the number of MEPs belonging to each group and, though party discipline is imperfect, with MEPs occasionally voting along national rather than party political lines, the partisan dominance is never seriously challenged. The party groups have supplemented their favourable institutional position with an impressive ECU 20 million pork barrel.[41]

The party groups formulate policy at group meetings after the bureaux have discussed it and made a recommendation. In strategic areas party groups tend to have established a position before negotiations start. In general, however, there is no group position on any issue

until it appears on the agenda–90 per cent of policy formulation is an *ad hoc* reaction to things as they come up in committee.[42]

Once a policy has been adopted, groups issue 'voting instructions' and some appoint whips to keep track of 'discipline'. Very occasionally, fines are issued to enforce discipline, but generally group whips are no more than keepers of records. The national delegations also tend to appoint whips to enforce both group and national delegation policies. Bureau decisions will usually carry unless there is a strong national whip or the issue is divisive within the group. The European Parliamentary Labour Party, for example, developed national positions on aspects of the IGC, tax, EMU, border controls and on *ad hoc* issues, such as BSE, but have voted solidly with the Socialist group on all other issues. Discipline is also reinforced by patronage as MEPs owe their positions (committee membership, chairmanships and the like) to the groups rather than their national delegations.

Left-right divisions in the European Parliament are less pronounced than in many national parliaments. Many members come from a national tradition of consensus politics and, without a government to support or oppose, voting patterns often reflect national, regional and sectional interests. This is reinforced by the fact that party groups themselves are not ideologically streamlined and can act more as a federation than a single body. As none of the major party groups has a majority in the parliament, they have to compromise to achieve the majorities required under legislative and budgetary procedures. Also, much of the Parliament's work takes place on committees where there is a high degree of cooperation with MEPs from other party groups building coalitions of interest, for example, on the Environment Committee where Socialist MEPs worked closely with Tory MEPs to push for the introduction of a carbon tax. In spite of this, however, the party groups are more cohesive than the parties in the US Congress, the level of contact between MEPs from different countries is intense and they tend to work together seamlessly.

The European Parliament is growing in importance, with co-decision powers on approximately 30 per cent of European business (which could go up to 50 or 60 per cent following the Amsterdam

Treaty).[43] It also has the right to ask the Commission to submit proposals. Eighty per cent of parliamentary amendments to EC legislation are now accepted by the Commission.[44] Very occasionally, it hits the headlines with high profile votes, such as that deploring French nuclear tests in the spring of 1996, accompanied by vigorous heckling of President Chirac. There is little doubt, however, that its greatest influence has been over the shape of the EU budget, where it has consistently and successfully pushed for increases in the structural funds, especially the regional and social funds – at the expense of the Common Agricultural Policy. Partly as a result of the Parliament's pressure, the share of the EU budget allocated to the CAP has dropped from almost 80 per cent to 50 per cent in fifteen years. Thus, the party-driven Parliament, by responding directly to the priorities and concerns of constituents, has consistently shown itself to be more in touch with popular priorities than the European Council.

However, in spite of shrewd use of the cooperation and co-decision procedures accrued through the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty (and extended further at Amsterdam), the Parliament's power remains limited and many of its more able members feel frustrated. It is certainly not yet in a position to act as a motor of integration. In its current form it is necessarily reactive, enjoying few of the functions of legitimate national parliaments. It is not a legislature–it cannot initiate legislation (though it can ask the Commission to consider making proposals) and it has no power or sanctions against the executive (the Council of Ministers). Bizarrely, the Parliament only has power over the EU's civil service, the Commission, and even that is limited to the right to block the Commission President's appointment or sack the entire Commission–the closest political equivalent to a nuclear deterrent. As the Parliament becomes more important, it will accrue power over and from the Commission, rather than the Council of Ministers. Long-term plans that have been mooted include allowing the Parliament to elect the Commission President and possibly allowing it a limited right of initiative. All these might be positive developments, but they will not put the Parliament in a position where it can force the executive arm of the EU, the Council of Ministers, to tackle high-salience

issues and become a party political forum. Ultimately, the most useful role that the Parliament can realistically play is that of a glorified dating agency, where national political parties can get to know each other, become comfortable with each other's company and forge links which can later be exercised on the Council.

Transnational talking shops?

Outside the institutions there are transnational parties. Their main function is to prepare a common programme for Euro-elections. The three main parties have formal policy making structures: a congress held every two years (or every year in the ELDR's caste), and a 'Bureau', that is in charge of the day-to-day running of the party, which is elected at the congress. The congress passes resolutions on the party's activities and those of the Party Group in the European Parliament as well as adopting the party's manifesto for European elections. Whilst decision making is based on consensus, all the parties use majority voting on some issues. This makes it possible for them to transcend the worst aspects of horse-trading. The Green Federation is committed to allowing national parties to 'maintain their name, identity and autonomy' and consequently gives member parties a veto on all issues.

All federations organise activities and exchanges between national parties. The two main areas of success have been running heavyweight working groups on specific policy areas (for example, the environment, unemployment or the Intergovernmental Conference) and organising networks of party apparatchiks with particular specialities. An example of a successful working group is the PES'S working group on employment (known as the Larsen Group) which was composed of ministers and high-level party officials from all the member states. The report firmly put employment on the agenda at the European Council and in the Parliament. Heavyweight groups and reports tend also to be more binding on national parties than policies arrived at through the usual channels.[45] An example of successful best practice sharing is the PES's one day election know-how programme which Phillip Gould, Labour's advertising adviser, organises twice a year.

Do the parties have any effect?

Until very recently, parties in Europe have operated under a self-deny-ing ordinance–rarely engaging in ideological competition even after the establishment of a European Parliament. The main goal of transna-tional party cooperation was to bring anti-European parties (like the Danish Socialists and the British Labour Party) into the mainstream consensus. The result was that 'between 1979 and 1989 [the first ten years of the directly elected European Parliament] vague 'pro-European' sentiments formed the core of the federations' programme for Europe. For over ten years these issues have been discussed without the federations proposing alternatives'.[46] Since the end of the 1980s, however, the party federations have begun, slowly, to take positions on socio-economic issues. Simon Hix has conducted a detailed analysis of official party documents and has isolated two major ideological cleav-ages that surfaced after 1989. The first is the *dirigiste-laissez-faire* dimension (including social policy, economic and social cohesion, eco-nomic policy coordination, EMU convergence criteria, Third World aid). The second is the *libertarian-authoritarian* divide (including human and civil rights, EU citizenship, women's rights, environmental

Figure 5. How parties split on socioeconomic issues[47]
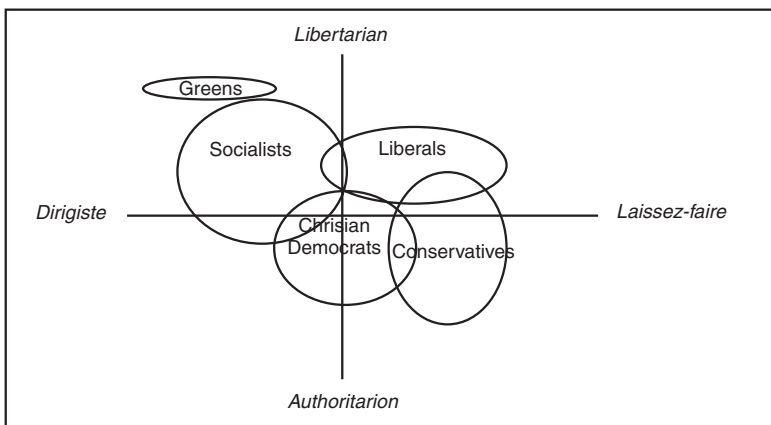
protection, immigration). These two cleavages have increasingly been reflected in divisions in the European Parliament. Political parties are beginning to perform a competitive role.

Slowly the parties are beginning to offer the beginnings of ideological choice. But their existence at a European level is still far more about organisation than about ideology, whether that means operating as groups in the European Parliament or as national parties cooperating before meetings of the European Council. However, in spite of their growing sphere of influence, even enthusiasts admit that the transnational parties are still extremely limited. As one Labour MEP put it, 'The PES is a purely declaratory policy making body outside the European Parliament.'[48]

How transnational are they?

If the test of a genuinely transnational party is a single leader, common policies, provisions for individual membership, a common system for the adoption of candidates and a unified budget, none of the European attempts remotely qualifies.

Furthermore, it is not hard to see the barriers currently in the way of serious transnational parties. Transnational parties are wholly dependent on national parties and political groups for their funding. There is as yet no transnational career structure for aspiring politicians and no uniform electoral procedure to allow parties to run a truly unified campaign for Euro-elections. Above all, there has been an unwillingness, until recently, on the part of national politicians to act as partisan figures at an EU level.

These are not, however, insuperable barriers. The transnational parties are an embryonic example of transnational policy formulation, the pre-summit meetings come closest to making decisions that are binding on national parties and the party groups in the European Parliament are extremely transnationalised and fairly cohesive (compared with the United States). They show that cooperation is possible. But the key step, which hasn't yet been taken, is to link that cooperation to power.

Has Euro-lobbying replaced political parties?

In gaining access to power, political parties have often been outwitted by lobbyists, using the perceived 'open door' of Brussels as opposed to the frequently 'closed door' of national government. Many companies, business sectors such as chemicals, local authorities and trade unions feel that they have more chance of getting a sympathetic hearing from the Commission and, since the Maastricht Treaty, the EU has institutionalised some corporatist patterns, under 'social dialogue', where European business interests and trade unions are consulted about economic and social legislation. This burgeoning of political activity outside the nation state and beyond the grasp of political parties has created over 600 Euro-groups covering the whole gamut of sectoral interests. The foot soldiers of this new movement are the 10,000 lobbyists who have set up shop in Brussels, outnumbering the Commission's administrative staff by approximately two to one.[49] And whereas in member states direct interest representation developed as a supplement to strong parliaments and party systems, in Europe it is a substitute for them.

The quest for competitive advantage – business was first off the mark

'Quite often [business] groups have better advance intelligence than their own governments. This is due to greater interest in European matters on the part of groups.'
Lynn Collie, CBI Brussels office[50]

Multinational business has long been an advocate of common regulations and standards, and a 'level playing field' for all products. In the EU they have found an ideal partner and one that has been open to lobbying since for every firm, and for every nation, there are great advantages in getting its own standards accepted as European ones.

The wooing of the EU began very early. Business' umbrella group, the Union of Industrial and Employers Associations (UNICE), was set up

in 1958 by the industrial federations of the six founder states, but it now includes federations of industry and employers from 22 countries – the EU, EFTA, plus Turkey, Cyprus, Malta arid San Marino. UNICE is the best resourced cross-sectoral pressure group in Brussels and is almost uniquely effective. It has an impressive policy formulation record and very sophisticated lobbying techniques. Its biggest asset is its Committee of Permanent Delegates who meet fortnightly to ensure day-to-day coordination between UNICE and its member federations, to exchange information on developments in the EU and to organise concerted lobbying efforts at the level of national federations. This unique body gives UNICE a high-powered and permanent presence, as well as an effective forum for reconciling the different views of national delegations. Policy formulation is also taken seriously, conducted by five main policy groups and assisted by some 50 working groups. In 1984 UNICE presented the Delors Commission, as it took office, with a memorandum stating that 'top priority must be given by the Community institutions to the creation of a genuine internal market'[51] Within a few months, the Commission produced the Cockfield White Paper which set out in concrete terms the measures which were needed to bring it about.

While UNICE and the European Business Round-table, an exclusive grouping of the chief executives of the top 40 European businesses, coordinate business generally, there are also scores of sectoral business networks, from the Federation of Stock Exchanges to the CEDG, the chemical industries' umbrella group. The oldest and possibly most successful sectoral business pressure group is the farmers' association, the Comité d'Organisations Professionnelles d'Agriculture (COPA), which has become a fixed part of the Brussels landscape. COPA boasts virtually unique access and involveinent in the Commission's decision making processes, accounting for 50 per cent of the membership of the Commission's advisory committees on products covered by the CAP regime. The fact that half of the EU budget continues to be spent on agriculture is a powerful testimony to COPA's success as a lobbying organisation.

Trade unions – playing catch-up

'The TUC never gets invited to tea at No. 10 these days, but it is invited to three-course lunches in Brussels.'
Tony Benn MP, 18 May 1989[52]

Ever since Australian dock workers provided support for striking London dockers in the 1880s, trade unions have expressed solidarity with workers in other countries through industrial action, sending food and money, and volumes of conference resolutions. More recently unions have begun to deal with multinational companies, campaigning jointly with companies like Ford and Kodak in the 1960s and 1970s, and lately using unions powers over pension funds, particularly in the USA, as a lever. Some sectoral organisations, like the International Metalworkers, have been successful, and the emergent of works councils under the Social Chapter is giving a new boost, since 1,200 companies are required to establish councils, including non-European firms operating in the EU. Significantly, the Commission itself is funding training for tens of thousands of shop stewards on how to negotiate for the establishment of a works council and how to use them once they are established.

But the biggest new growth area is lobbying. National labour federations such as the TUC have Brussels offices and policies of their own, as do some trade unions (though the GMB is the only British union with a Brussels office, as well as being a pioneer of bilateral deals such as its arrangement with the German IG Chemie union to provide joint membership and mutual protection services).

The gateway to the Commission and the European decision making process is the European Trade Union Congress (ETUC), which is a powerful force for policy making and networking. It draws on the fact that most national federations have close links with national governments (for example, the Deutsche Gewerkschafts Bund (DGB) has links with Chancellor Kohl through its CDU wing, the TUC with Tony Blair

through the Labour Party), while also using formal representation on the EU's Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) which advises the Commission and the Council of Ministers on economic and social legislation. The result of all of this is that Europe has become central to trade unions' business: 'There is not a single TUC employee in Congress House [the headquarters of the TUC] whose job doesn't have a European component to it.'[53]

Local councils: from junketing to glocalisation

The magnetic attraction of the European Union for local authorities is not hard to understand. The Union showers them with regional aid – over £20 billion a year (the equivalent of the entire Irish GDP) – offers them formal political power through representation on the Assembly of the Regions (established in 1994) and massages their egos through the principle of subsidiarity. What is more, it presents absolutely no threat to their jealously guarded power base.

The first type of activity has been twinning. Though it was pioneered in this country as early as 1920, when Keighley in West Yorkshire linked up with Poix-du-Nord in France, it wasn't until we joined the European Union that twinning really took off. There are now 1,821 twinning arrangements between the UK and other countries. The UK's main twinning partners are France and Germany, with 875 and 463 links respectively. Always popular as a junk0ting opportunity, twinning has evolved into a new type of partnership. It is now more about economic regeneration than choral exchanges, sporting competitions or amateur dramatics. Increasingly local authorities look to areas that are useful for grant applications (so they can get their slice of the ECU 7.5 million twinning budget), as well as providing useful instruments for community regeneration such as work experience placements. The European Town Twinning Fund has 250 applications a year from the UK, 75 per cent of which are successful.

The other big innovation for local government has been the formation of multinational networks. The motivations for participating in networks are diverse and include: a wish to profile the individual city

in the European arena; an attempt to accelerate policy learning and borrowing; a strategy for lobbying the Commission and the European Parliament; a desire to contact partners in other EU countries in order to meet the Commission's requirements for funding cross-national programmes; a desire to be in the right places to get to know and be known in the hope of enhancing the authority's probability of gaining European funding.[54] The most impressive regional network is Euroregion, which includes Kent, Brussels, Flanders, Wallonia and the French region of Nord-Pas de Calais. The Euroregion, with a combined population of 15 million, has the clout to compete with the German *Länder* for funding. Kent alone has benefited from an extra £60 million of EU funding for capital and revenue schemes ranging from financing access roads to the Channel Tunnel to supporting training schemes for the young unemployed.

Social movements

Wildlife enthusiasts, anti-poverty campaigners and bizarre religious sects all come under the generic title of social movements. What many have in common is a high level of transnational activity and a hankering for Euro-money. A 1994 survey of national voluntary organisations in the UK graphically illustrates the extent to which charities and voluntary organisations, many of which were traditionally firmly nation-bound, are developing European strategies for funding and activism.[55] The questionnaire asked respondents whether they had sought a contract in another member state or planned to, provided a service for user fees in another member state or planned to, had set up

Figure 6. UK voluntary organisations active or planning to be active across frontiers in the European Union[56]

Action	%
Seek or plan to seek donations	44
Fee or plan fee for service	29
Seek or plan to seek contracts	23
Set up or plan to set up branch or subsidiary	18

a branch or subsidiary in another member state for any of these purposes or planned to. Of the 277 organisations which responded, over 40 per cent had undertaken or planned to undertake some activity in another member state.

Smarting from the charge that money buys influence in EU decision making, the Commission have set up an extensive funding programme to attempt to put pressure groups and social movements on a level-pegging with business in the lobbying game. The European Environmental Bureau (EEB), for example, is almost exclusively funded by the European Commission and attempts are made to integrate it into the EU decision making process.

Public opinion and the EU: the legitimacy gap

The effect of all these different forms of transnationalisation has been to create a hew elite of MEPs, ministers (only behind closed doors), civil servants, lawyers, business people and social movements which now regularly cooperate. But far from providing a bridge between the European institutions and European citizens, the growth of this activity has coincided with an apparently widening gulf.

The most revealing symptom of this is the gap between the public's priorities for the European Union and the actions of the member state governments at a European level. Poll after poll reveals that the public expects the European Union to step in where national political systems are failing: maintaining peace and security, tackling unemployment, fighting international crime, terrorism and drugs, and protecting the environment. Thus 72 per cent of people think that environmental pollution and terrorism can be more effectively tackled at a European than at a national level, 61 per cent think the same about relations with other regions of the world, 60 per cent about defence and 57 per cent about tackling organised crime.[57] Seventy two per cent of UK citizens think that it is important that the EU pursues social as well as economic objectives.[58]

Technocratic concerns such as a single currency and ensuring an adequate income for farmers consistently come towards the bottom of Euro-wish lists. But although only 4 per cent of people in the UK and 9 per cent of the entire EU population see ensuring an adequate

income for farmers as a priority,[59] 50 per cent of the EU budget continues to be spent on agriculture, and almost one in five Council of Ministers' meetings are devoted to agriculture and fisheries–more than any other issue.

What people want...

Figure 7. People's top priority for the IGC[60]

	UK	EU15
Peace	31	41
Drugs, crime and terrorism	17	10
Fighting unemployment	15	17
Respect for human rights	8	7
Defence and security	7	6
Protecting the environment	6	4
Single currency	5	9
The right to health	5	2
The right to education and training	4	2

Figure 8. People's priorities for the next ten years[61]

	UK	EU15
Drugs, terrorism and crime	50	42
Peace	48	46
Respect for law and justice	46	36
Promote economic growth	35	29
Protecting the environment	35	29
Social welfare	21	24
Guarantee individual liberties	17	27
Defend EU interests in the world	13	10
Assure an adequate income for farmers	4	9
Don't know	4	2

What they get ...

Figure 9. Meetings of the European Council of Ministers per sector, January–October 1995 (percentages)[62]

General	16.5	Environment	5	Telecommu-nications	2.5	Industry	2.5
ECOFIN	14	Justice and home affairs	5	Research ment	2.5	Develop	2.5
Agriculture	13	Labour and social affairs	5	Education	2.5	Budget	2.5
Fisheries	6.5	Internal market	3.5	Culture	2.5	Health	2.5
Transport	5	Consumer protection	3.5	Energy	2.5		

Figure 10. Distribution of EU budget, 1995[63]

Sector	%
CAP	50.5
Structural operations (including structural funds, cohesion fund, EAGGF, FIFG, ERDF, ESF, Community initiatives)	31.5
Internal policies (including research, transport, fisheries, education, culture, communications, energy, EURATOM, environment, consumer protection, reconstruction aid, Trans-European Networks, JHA	6.0
External action (including EDF, food aid, cooperation, CFSP)	5.0
Administrative expenditure	3.5
Compensation	2.0
Reserves	1.5

Euro-apathy or Euroscepticism?

The public's response to the inability of European Union institutions and activities to key into areas of concern has been apathy on a grand scale. Turnout in European Parliament elections has; consistently been lower than in national elections in all member states and has fallen with each succeeding election (except in the UK). It fell to just over half in countries with no compulsory voting in 1994 and hit an unimpressive ceiling of 36 per cent in the UK. There are a variety of explanations (many discussed in this publication) for the low turnout in

Europe, but this gap between what the public want from Europe and what they get must be part of it.

However, it would be a mistake to see the low turnout in European elections as a signal that people do not want accountability for decisions made in Europe. Seventy three per cent of the British public think that people should 'know which way individual ministers vote in the meetings of ministers of EU countries' – only 11 per cent disagree.[64]

Figure 11. Euro-apathy: election turnout (percentages)[65]

	1979	1984	1989	1994
EU	63.0	61.0	58.5	55.6
EU (without compulsory voting)	**54.3**	**54.7**	**51.8**	**52.0**
Austria	–	–	–	–
Belgium	**91.6**	**92.2**	**90.7**	**90.7**
Denmark	47.1	52.3	46.1	52.5
Finland	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
France	60.7	56.7	48.7	53.5
Germany	**65.0**	**56.8**	**62.4**	**58.0**
Greece	78.6	77.2	79.9	71.1
Ireland	**63.6**	**47.6**	**68.3**	**44.0**
Italy	85.5	83.9	81.5	74.8
Luxembourg	**88.9**	**87.0**	**87.4**	**90.0**
Netherlands	57.8	50.5	47.2	35.6
Portugal	**–**	**72.2**	**51.1**	**35.7**
Sweden[*]	–	–	–	41.6
Spain	**–**	**68.9**	**54.8**	**59.6**
UK	31.6	32.6	36.2	36.2

Note: Attendance at the polling booth is compulsory in Belgium, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg. *Sweden's election was in 1995

Knowledge-free zone

Apathy about European institutions is bolstered by widespread ignorance of the European decision making process. A mere 2 per cent claim to know 'a great deal' about UK membership of the European Union, while 73 per cent think that they know 'not very much' or 'nothing at all'.[66] A poll by MORI, sponsored by the European Movement,

asked whether Jacques Santer was (a) the French minister in charge of nuclear testing in the Pacific, (b) the President of the European Commission, (c) a Formula One racing driver, or (d) a French fashion designer.[67] Forty five per cent admitted they didn't know, 26 per cent thought he was the French minister in charge of nuclear testing in the Pacific and 27 per cent thought he was the President of the Commission. Among the female sample, 27 per cent thought he was the French minister, while only 17 per cent thought that he was President of the Commission. This lack of knowledge is reinforced by the fact that on the National Curriculum there is no requirement to teach people about the EU *even* in the constitutional part of the Politics A level.

People also feel let down by politicians and the media. Ninety per cent of people think that 'MPs should make a more determined effort to explain the benefits of EU membership', 86 per cent think that 'politicians manipulate coverage of the EU and make it difficult to get an impartial view' and 78 per cent think that 'the media's information about the EU doesn't give all sides of the argument'.[68] There is

Figure 12. Euro-ignorance

How much do you feel you know about the UK's membership of the European Union?
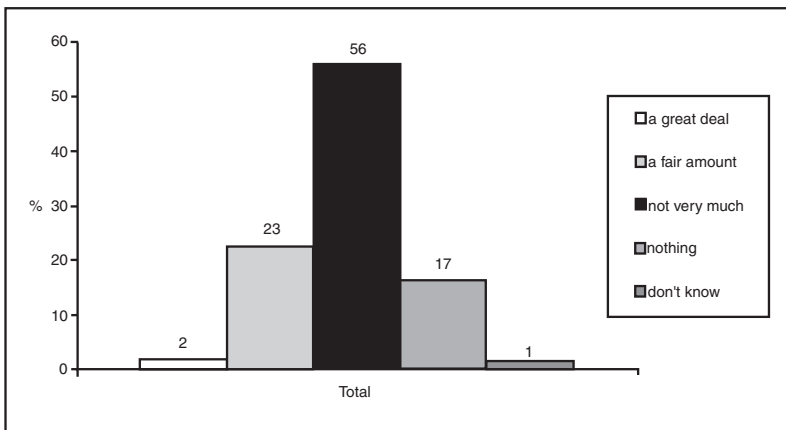
a widespread thirst for more information–89 per cent of UK and 86 per cent of EU citizens think that schools should teach children about the way European Union institutions work.[69]

Is the public Eurosceptic?

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the mass of British people have not consistently opposed membership of the EU, Polls taken for the British Social Attitudes survey show a steady decline in support for withdrawal from the EU, falling to just 11 per cent in 1994 (although it has edged up a bit very recently).[70] What is perhaps more surprising is the level of support that deeper unification enjoys with 57 per cent in the UK and 70 per cent: across the EU supporting the efforts being made to unify Western Europe.[71] Even in the UK substantially more people regard membership of the EU as a good thing (42 per cent) than as a bad thing (24 per cent).[72] This goodwill carries through to the future: 41 per cent of UK citizens think that Britain will be benefiting from EU membership in five years, compared to 32 per cent who think that it won't.[73] There is also a strong perception across the European Union that unification will continue. Thus, 61 per cent of people in the UK and 63 per cent in the EU as a whole expect the EU to have a common defence and military policy in 2010.[74] Sixty per cent in the UK and 64 per cent in the EU expect the European Union to act in common on the main principles of economic policy.[75] Fifty six per cent in the UK and 55 per cent in the whole EU expect the European Union to act in common on the main principles of social and employment policy, with only 26 per cent and 25 per cent respectively disagreeing.[76] Seventy three per cent of people in the UK expect the impact of the EU on the lives of ordinary people to grow over the next five years.[77]

We should, however, be wary of reading too much into these figures. A mass of qualitative evidence shows that preferences are not very deep.[78] Most people have been relatively indifferent to the EU most of the time but have been ready to respond to a political lead from the politicians they most respect. David Butler analysed the poll findings between 1960 and the 1975 referendum and noted that

'the picture of fickleness in the overall figures is impressive.'[79] He argues that the main reason for fluctuations was the reception of blurred and changing messages from party leaders. Thus, when a Labour government attempted to renegotiate entry in 1966–67 it carried a large majority of its own voters with it, but a majority of Tories swung the other way. Precisely the opposite effect was seen in 1971, when a Conservative government was in charge of negotiations. In the 1975 referendum, too, voters lined up behind their leaders with 85 per cent to 15 per cent of Conservatives and 70 per cent to 30 per cent of Liberals supporting membership. In the divided Labour Party, 52.5 per cent supported membership and 47.25 per cent opposed it.[80] The current indifference of most voters reflects the political parties' failure to mobilise! support for the Union.

The failure of national politicians to engage constructively with Europe is feeding through to the electorate. A poll by the European Movement revealed that only 4 per cent trust politicians to tell

Figure 13. Euro-distrust[83]

Which if any of these people would you trust to tell the truth about the European Union?
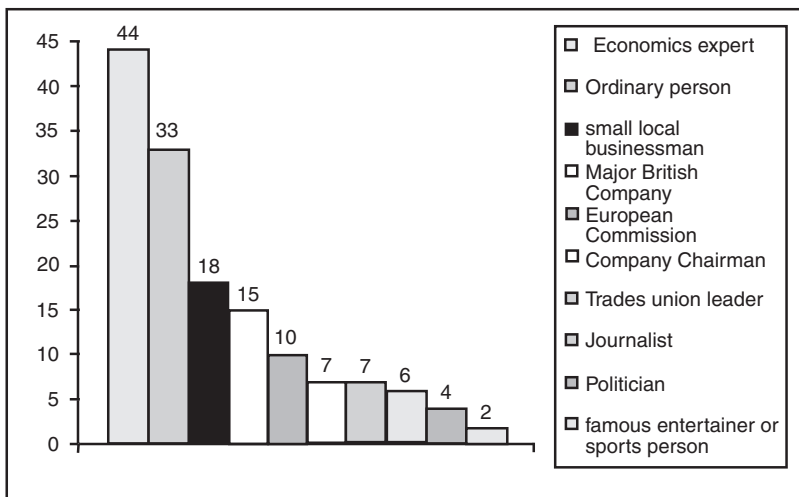
the truth on Europe–less than half of the number that trust the European Commission (10 per cent).[81] Although politicians tend to score low on all 'trust' polls, these figures are far worse than general polls assessing people's trust of politicians. Thus, a general MORI poll revealed that only 14 per cent of the public 'generally trusted politicians to tell the truth',[82] over three times as high as the score on Europe. Another striking thing about the European Movement poll is the faith that people place in 'economic experts', reflecting the technocratic ethos that has so far characterised the EU.

Suppose somebody was seeking to persuade you of the benefits of being in the European Union; which if any of these people would you trust to tell the truth?

People are opening up to Europe

While there is ambivalence about EU institutions, there has been a striking recent trend of growing openness to Europe in everyday life. More people travel to Europe every year, more people eat European food and there is an ever growing convergence in patterns of consumption across the continent, as Europeans watch the same films, use the same products and recognise the same brands (even if they are largely American). At the same time, similar challenges, such as ageing populations and high unemployment, have led to a convergence of political priorities.

These longer-term forces pushing towards what could loosely be called a common culture are reflected in patterns of identity: a surprisingly high 48 per cent of UK citizens claim to feel European and a majority, 57 per cent, EU-wide regard themselves as European.[84] There is also a marked intergenerational difference –young people are much more open to Europe than their parents, with 56 per cent of people under 40 in the UK feeling European.[85]

These figures suggest that most people are comfortable about membership of the EU and indeed, over 53 per cent would be prepared to trade a loss in economic sovereignty in return for higher living standards.[86] Yet so far this growing Europeanism has not been properly reflected politically.

What's wrong with conventional solutions?
Bureaucracy as the answer

'Europe could only be created in the absence of democracy.'
Claude Cheysson, former French Foreign Secretary and European Commissioner

'I have never understood why public opinion about European ideas should be taken into account.'
Raymond Barre, former French PM and Commissioner

For many influential figures, little of this matters. What counts is the delivery of results, and that is best done at one remove from politics. The original 'High Authority' of the Coal and Steel Community was a classic bureaucratic creation, staffed by 'enlightened technocrats'. According to the theory, society is represented by Interest groups vying for influence on policy makers through the use of lobbying. The problem is that this form of government is poor at strategic planning, since it often reduces to balancing interest groups rather than articulating fully formed programmes of change; it is poor at representation (Schattschneider, writing on the US model of bureaucratic politics, coined the phrase 'the semi-sovereign people' in a classic expose of the distortions between public policy and public priorities that bureaucratic government creates) and it is poor at mobilising support and legitimising decisions. Worse, it always runs the risk of turning into plutocracy, as business and economic interests have more resources at their disposal and are generally better organised than other sectors.

Intergovernmentalism
The other argument against being too worried about problems of legitimacy is that Europe is, and should remain, essentially 'intergovernmental' rather than the embryo of a new polity. Intergovernmentalism is the form of decision making used by virtually all international organisations: the UN, GATT, G7, NATO, the OSCE,

the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters and so on. Usually such structures require decisions to be taken unanimously, while excluding formal structures for proposing and implementing measures, or for that matter structures for appealing and scrutinising decisions.

Intergovernmentalism is not just a type of decision making, it is a mindset. It frames the debate entirely around the idea of national interest. By its nature it is bad at acting strategically, slow to make decisions (the unanimity principle for example blocked agreement on the colour of the European passport ten years after the principle had been agreed). Those parts of the EU which are almost entirely intergovernmental – pillars two and three – have been the least successful, as evidenced by the failure to agree on any policy on the former Yugoslavia under pillar two, and the failure to draw up a list of countries requiring visas to regulate freedom of movement under pillar three. Continuing intergovernmentalism could be one future for the EU, but not for an EU that aims to achieve very much.

The reform orthodoxy

Neither bureaucracy nor intergovernmentalism offers a convincing way of marrying effectiveness and legitimacy. This is why most people who have thought seriously about the future of EU have looked to other areas of reform to ensure that decisions at a European level truly reflect the varied opinions and aspirations of European citizens, with the solutions falling into roughly five categories: democracy, transparency, subsidiarity, citizenship and leadership.

Democracy. The most commonly proposed solution to the democratic deficit lies in giving greater powers to the European Parliament. But given the legendary lack of enthusiasm for Euro-elections, this seems a dubious strategy. As the European Parliament accumulates power, pundits confidently predict that it will break through into the popular consciousness. Every election is hailed as a new dawn, but somehow the excitement never materialises. This might change if we adapted European elections. At present, they serve as a platform for a protest vote against the government

and are very rarely fought on European issues. Some commentators have called for the introduction of a transnational list so that parties are forced to campaign on European issues. This might work, but it would not necessarily affect the turnout. The new powers of the Parliament have made it more important and more responsible, but, whatever electoral system we choose, elections to the European Parliament will neither lead to the formation of government nor to the formation of public policy – the two key functions of democratic elections. That leaves the central problem – that the public have no forum in which they can vote for the type of Europe that they support – unaffected.

The second alternative is the increased use of referendums. Unfortunately, referendums are also, at best, a blunt tool, since campaigns are easily hijacked by domestic concerns, as the French Maastricht referendum demonstrated. Above all, referendums do not provide a continuing relationship between the voters and governments.

A third route which is becoming very fashionable is to plug the democratic deficit by giving national parliaments a. bigger role in European decision making. Plans range from the radical French idea of creating a second chamber of the European Parliament made up of seconded national MPs to the more modest proposal of beefing up the Conference of European Affairs Committees (COSAC), the European network of national European Affairs Committees. Any measure which goes some way to plugging the enormous accountability gap in national parliaments or which educates national MPs about European goings-on can only be a good thing, but it is wrong to attach too much hope to these proposals. The French second chamber idea is attractive, but looks uncannily like the European Parliament before direct elections were introduced, which was also composed of seconded national MPs. Direct elections were introduced precisely because part-time seconded MPs were providing inadequate scrutiny and were failing to play the linkage functions demanded of them.

Finally people have suggested holding direct elections for the President of the Commission. This would give the Commission more power and status vis-a-vis the Council of Ministers, plug the most blatant democratic deficit and produce an election that would have to be

fought on European issues. This might allow people to vote for the type of Europe they believe in, but it is strange that the body endowed with this mission, should be the European civil service. Though the Commission has the right of initiative, it is not able to vote or implement decisions – these powers rest with the Council of Ministers and member states. It must make more sense to politicise these bodies – the preserve of politicians – than the civil service.

Transparency. The next set of conventional solutions involve greater openness. The European Council, Council of Ministers, COREPER and working; groups all meet behind closed doors. No transcripts of their meetings are circulated and neither opposition parties nor the press are given access to the papers discussed. The fact that the public are not given access to key papers that affect their existence is portrayed by some as the root of a deep-seated suspicion of EU institutions.

But it would be wrong to see greater openness as a panacea for all the EU's legitimacy problems. There is no reason to suppose that access to the transcripts of a meeting on tomato paste in Euro-bureaucratese or the chance to watch fisheries ministers battling it out over mesh sizes on television or for that matter more grandstanding by leading politicians would increase public satisfaction with the EU. In fact it is quite possible that it would result in even greater public apathy.

Subsidiarity. Some commentators have pinned legitimacy problems on the invasive nature of the EU. They see public resentment of EU institutions as a product of EU institutions taking on responsibilities which are better exercised at a lower level. Whilst the principle of subsidiarity (that decisions should be taken at the lowest efficient level) is healthy, it is unlikely that–on its own at least–it will reconnect popular aspirations with EU decisions. Indeed it could make it all the more likely that the most difficult decisions would float up to the European level.

Citizenship. Many have argued that one of the biggest sources of legitimacy for the national state are the citizenship rights that it affords to its residents. Attempts have therefore; been made to shift these

benefits to a European level with the European passport and voting rights in local and Euro-elections for EU citizens living outside their home countries. It is true that many countries vying for membership are inspired by the provisions for European citizens. This is what underlies attempts to get the EU to sign the European Convention of Human Rights and provide some form of voluntary service. However, in the absence of other steps, the legitimising effect will be extremely limited, as the passport experience has shown.

Leadership. Opinion research shows that the fact that politicians are rarely positive about Europe or honest about its significance is having an impact on its legitimacy. Political leadership can go a long way towards securing public support for European Union membership and improving public understanding. But leadership must be based around policies that would actually improve the quality of people's lives.

Delivering success

Better representation, more openness and accountability are positive and well worth striving for, but they cannot deliver legitimacy if the Union is not achieving things that matter to people. One of the more surreal aspects of the new orthodoxy on the legitimacy of the EU is the way in which the debate has been conducted entirely in terms of institutional representation rather than linking representation to results. Europe's politicians have explored three routes to deliver success. These include more majority voting, greater flexibility and building an economic fortress.

Majority voting. One of the obvious barriers to efficiency within the EU is the fact that so many important decisions still require a unanimous vote in the Council of Ministers or the European Council. The answer, many believe, is to remove the veto from member states so that no single country dan block the progression to new levels of integration. This was absolutely necessary for completing the 1992 Single Market programme, as years of atrophy before the introduction of

Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) showed. There are many other areas where the extension of QMV will help – such as foreign policy in pillar two and police cooperation in pillar three. In some areas, however, such as security policy, it seems to be a false conclusion. It is unrealistic to expect a country to wage war and risk the lives of its citizens if it opposed to the use of force in principle. In these situations, it makes more sense to introduce ideas such as 'constructive abstention' which allow a member state to show it is uneasy about a particular policy and to opt out of its implementation without blocking others. The Amsterdam Treaty goes some way towards incorporating this procedure.

Flexibility. Flexibility was the buzz-word of the IGC negotiations and has attracted a lot of support from across Europe. One of the perceived obstacles to efficiency is the 'one-size-fits-all integration pattern which leads to the politics of the lowest common denominator. In order to prepare for enlargement and find a way around more obstreperous member states, plans have been drawn up for a flexibility clause which will allow certain member states to borrow the EU's institutions for 'enhanced cooperation' in certain policy areas. This will allow the creation of a multi-speed Europe, based on coalitions of the willing (or the able). There are however different types of flexibility. These range from 'Europe à la carte', where member states can opt out of the principle of a decision, to the flexible arrangements of EMU, where member states are excluded until they are able to meet certain criteria.

Fortress Europe. Some people have seen globalisation and the fall of the Berlin wall as a threat to the European way of life. They claim that in order to protect our social conditions and deliver prosperity for EU citizens, we must exclude less developed countries from the EU and its markets. They want to put a brake on immigration from the south and east, block enlargement and introduce prohibitive tariffs for imports from outside the EU. The arguments for this approach are on the wane and are particularly problematic given the momentum towards enlargement to the East.

Newer solutions

A more productive way to think about legitimacy is to look at where the EU has been successful in the past. Broadly speaking, the EU tends to have very high legitimacy in countries and regions where the nation state is dysfunctional and in countries and regions that have benefited financially from EU membership.

The best example of the first case is Italy. Europe is seen by Italians as a constraining influence on 'national vices'. Its popularity is widespread, extending both to the secessionist North and the poorer South. Indeed, the national government is planning to piggy-back on the EU's legitimacy by introducing a 'Euro-tax' to reduce the country's debt to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria. This tax is not being imposed simply to abdicate responsibility for an unpopular decision, but rather because only Europe has enough legitimacy to sustain a new tax. The perception is that money raised for the Italian government will be wasted. Belgium is in a similar position, So are various regions which have tense relationships with their national governments, such as Scotland, Wales and Catalonia.

The epitome of the second case is Ireland which has plunged its hands deep into the Euro-pork barrel. Other countries and regions which have benefited such as Greece, or Wales and Scotland in the UK, tend to be equally pro-European. In fact, one of the best and simplest methods the EU has had of securing acceptance has been to erect signs on motorways declaring that they are funded by the EU. There is a tendency to feel slightly uneasy about the politics of the pork barrel, but it is a fact that all transnational regimes (and most national ones) are and must be sustained by the pork barrel because people will not respect a regime that does not deliver for them.

What conclusions can we draw from this? If we are interested in making political decisions reflecting people's preferences, and making them deliver, we must build a political system which has strong incentives to tackle high-salience issues. Although the European Union is *sui generis*–pioneering wholly new forms of cooperation and governance–no one has come up with an alternative to the political party as a link between people and policies. If Europe is ever to become more

than a regulated framework of rules, it needs authority and legitimacy which it simply doesn't have. Political parties have their limitations, but they are the only mechanism that can bring this about and shift the focus of activity to areas that motivate the public. To achieve this we need political parties to set the agenda in places that matter – running the European Council of Ministers and Summits rather than being ghettoised in the Parliament.

Figure 14. What can traditional solutions achieve?

	Structural democratic deficit	Economic interest	Political elite power trade-off	Efficiency	Peace and Stability	Cohesion
Designer democracy	☺	–	☺	☹	–	–
Transparency	☺	–	–	–	–	
Subsidiarity	–	–	☺	–	–	–
Citizenship	–	–	–	–	☺	☺
Political leadership	–	☺	–	☺	☺	☺
Flexibility	☺	–	☺	–	–	☹
Majority voting	☹	–	☺	☺	–	☹
Fortress Europe	–	–	–	–	☹	☺
Inertia	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹

key: ☺ make better; ☹ make worse; – no difference.

Party futures

Why Europe needs multinational parties

To some it will seem perverse to see political parties as the solution to the European Union's legitimacy problems. The polls, they will say, show that if anything has less legitimacy than the European Union, it is the political party. Politicians of all hues are less loved than traffic wardens and tax inspectors – and they are more popular than the parties they represent. Even John Major, the most unpopular party leader since records began, consistently outscored his party in the polls.

Despite the excitement on 1 May, the prospects for political parties have been under pressure for a number of years. Their monopoly on activism continues to break down as politics spreads ever wider – rom the supermarket to the bedroom. Politics has been privatised and is often viewed more in terms of lifestyle than through the traditional divisions that motivate party politics.[87] This rise in postmaterialist values (values associated with identity and belonging rather than security and appearance) is reflected in the membership of organisations which are in tune with them.[88] Environmental groups are now larger than political parties.[89] The age of the mass party seems to be over.

What are political parties for?

There can be little doubt that parties are in trouble. But it does not follow that their function has been usurped. That function is clear-cut: to provide a link between the state and civil society. The most successful

political parties, such as the Congress Party in India, have not merely created a link between the state and civil society, but have actually created a civil society in their own image. Congress brought together disparate ethnicities, religions and cultures and united them with the invention of an Indian nation. Few parties have gone this far, but all of the major ones play a role in legitimating the strategic choices of government, particularly the harder ones. Moreover this role is at the heart of all modern representative political systems.

The seven functions of political parties
Parties perform essentially seven tasks or functions:

(a) defining strategic goals
(b) projecting an ethos and mission
(c) articulating the interests of different social groups
(d) implementing policy
(e) scrutinising government and legislation
(f) mobilising and communicating with citizens
(g) recruiting and developing leaders

To understand why reform of parties will be essential to the future evolution of the EU, we need to understand how stronger parties could improve on the current forms of decision making.

The virtues of parties by comparison with existing structures can be summarised as follows:

Strategy and mission. First, parties are often better at strategy. The EU has not traditionally been very good at thinking strategically and, when it has done so, its thoughts have often not been realised. The most striking example of good intentions falling by the way side is the common transport policy that was provided for in the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and! is still awaiting realisation. Strategic goals are often seen as the Commission's stamping ground–in line with the founding fathers' view of it as a 'motor of European integration'. In practice, it

tends to be the European Council which sets priorities, but the agenda is driven more by the aggregation of interests than strategic planning. The metaphors and vocabulary surrounding European integration, encapsulated in talk of 'the project' and bicycles, betray a very clear sense of mission. This is reflected in the 'solemn declaration' that Commissioners make on assuming office and usually in their behaviour in the post. It is also reflected in the actions of key individuals such as German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Unfortunately, the only mission adequately expressed is deeper integration: there is no competition between different political visions of future integration.

Articulating interests. The second role parries perform is to articulate interests. The EU does better here. However, the interests that are articulated are those of particular sectors rather than the socioeconomic interests of the population at large. Parties tend to be good at reconciling diverse interests.

Implementing policy. The success of the Community in deciding and implementing policy depends largely on whether decisions are taken under unanimity or Qualified Majority Voting. In areas where the Commission and the European Court of Justice have been in charge of ensuring that legislation gets implemented, that is to say all areas other than Cemmon Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs, the EU has had quite an impressive policy implementation record: almost 90 per cent of EU directives have been implemented. But it is important to remember that implementation is the responsibility of member states.

Scrutiny. Scrutiny is one of the EU's biggest weaknesses. The European Parliament and the European Court of Justice scrutinise European legislation competently, but at a national level, as we have seen, there is a real accountability gap.

Mobilising. Mobilising citizens has been another recurring weakness. The Commission and the European Parliament both have annual

information budgets that run to millions of ECUs, but they barely penetrate the public's consciousness. National governments and political parties have made virtually no attempts to mobilise their populations behind EU integration.

Finally, recruiting and developing leaders has traditionally been difficult because of the fragmented nature of decision making and the absence of a supranational career structure. In theory therefore, there ought to be scope for more partisan activity at EU level to improve matters.

Are the existing political parties up to the challenge?

If stronger political parties are theoretically well placed to improve the effectiveness and legitimacy of European decisions, how much can we realistically expect from the parties which currently operate in Europe? In the gloominess about the future of political parties, there is a tendency to confuse voter de-alignment and electoral volatility with a decline in parties.[90] It is true that voters change their allegiances and parties on the fringes of the establishment mop up many of the newly-freed votes. There is uncertainty and change. But this does not mean either that uncertainty is permanent or that political parties are on the way out. Let us examine how changes in the world have impacted on the seven core functions of political parties in Europe:

Defining strategic goals. It is often claimed that Europe's political parties have lost their ability to think strategically. The short term wins over the long term and the politically expedient over the right course of action. Tough decisions are ducked, responsibility is evaded and crisis management comes to the fore as our parties opt for an easy life. Ask any focus group, anywhere in Europe, why parties and politicians fail to enthuse and you will get the same answers: 'politicians are all the same' or 'voting doesn't change anything'. This argument can, however, be turned on its head. The reason national parties can't be strategic is that national governments can't deliver. Since many of the key decisions can be made now only at a transnational level, it is here that we need political parties more than ever.

Projecting ethos and mission. The end of ideology, the end of history, the end of political parties? Some have argued that 1989, the blurring of differences between right and left, has ended parties' role in promoting; distinctive missions. In fact history has repeatedly shown that whenever anyone proclaims the end of ideology, it usually presages the emergence of new ideologies. One can see this even today in Europe's parties. It is not just that the parties of the far right or the green left offer distinctive programmes well away from the mainstream; it is also that all parties, even the most moderate ones, find that they need an ethos and ideology to retain their coherence and discipline, Even the most apparently non-ideological parties sometimes go through periods of sharp ideological redefinition. The reinvention of the US Republicans by Newt Gingrich is just one recent example.

Articulating the interests of different social groups. The biggest shock to the party system was the growth and development of a middle class with no clear party affiliation into the dominant section of the workforce and society. This fundamentally changed the relationship between parties and legitimacy. The role of parties in securing legitimacy for political decisions had to evolve from the direct expression of interests to the structuring and implementation of mass opinion. Parties have had to move away from literally integrating people in the political process through internal organisation. Their role is now to engage with the electorate by aggregating and shaping political choices into programmes and offering the people a choice. This move from 'representative' democracy to 'competitive' democracy has been presented by the pessimists as a dangerous blow to parties and their legitimation function. In fact these arguments are backward-looking and romanticise the effectiveness of purely representational political systems. There is strong evidence that competition for political leadership is the best means of ensuring a congruence between public priorities and public policy.[91] The fact that, in order to get elected, parties are forced to adopt an all-encompassing programme which appeals to a majority of voters rather than appealing to a sectional group means

that there are necessarily more people satisfied by the programme that is eventually implemented.

Implementing policy. There is a permanent tension between the pressure political parties are under to devise and formulate policies and the limited opportunities they have for enforcement. Prime examples of this are taxation in Italy (where governments have seldom lasted long enough or had the legitimacy to make a better fist of dealing with fiscal policy) and family values in the UK (where governments have consistently failed to legislate the stringent standards that its supporters have demanded). But as a rule strong parties do make it easier for governments to implement far-reaching policies, such as building infrastructures, setting up or reforming welfare systems, while weak parties make implementation harder.

Scrutinising government and legislation. Through the tabling of parliamentary questions, press releases and the rough-and-tumble of political knock-about, political parties constantly exercise pressure for open government. The pressure caused by a struggle for competitive advantage causes a greater incentive for open government than any other system of administration where there are no obvious incentives for openness.

Mobilising and communicating With citizens. Political parties can no longer mobilise the electorate, or so their critics claim. They cite a decline in membership as proof of their claims. Yet, if there has been a decline in party membership, it is certainly not across the board. Katz and Maier, who have undertaken a major study of the internal organisation of political parties in eleven EU countries over 30 years found that six countries (Belgium, Italy, Norway and Sweden, Germany and Finland) registered an absolute increase over the period and only four registered a decline (Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK).[92] During the same period, there has been a huge increase in the staff and resources of party central offices. The meteoric rise in Labour

Party membership since Tony Blair became leader (doubling its size in only two years) has also confounded decline theorists' predictions.

In fact, far from breaking the link with civil society and marginalising their membership, many different parties have actually given them! more decision making power. In 1970, for example, the Belgian P$C introduced direct elections for party president and followed this in 1980 by introducing membership ballots place for all internal party elections. In Ireland, Fine Gael is moving towards a direct vote for members in leadership elections. Similar moves have occurred in Denmark, Germany and in the Netherlands. In 1981 the British Labour Party, by introducing an electoral college, allowed representatives of the membership a direct vote in the leadership elections. Moves towards 'one member one vote' since 1993, the ballots on the reform of Clause IV and 'The Road to the Manifesto' have put individual members at the heart of internal party democracy. And the Conservatives, under William Hague, look ready to follow suit.

What has changed dramatically is the way political parties communicate with their membership. Parties have given up many of their educational and socialisation functions to the media. Few, if any, maintain their own channel of communication, be this a party press or a party broadcasting system. They now rely, almost exclusively, on independent printed media and broadcasting networks. The days when someone interested in politics had to join a party to find out what it is doing are long gone. This has had repercussions for allocation of party funds and party organisation. Much of the important work of the party in central office is being carried out by professionals and consultants rather than by traditional party bureaucrats or activists. The accountability of staff matters less than their expertise. These are positive developments which point to a shift in party activities from organising the party on the ground towards mobilising support in the electorate at large.

Recruiting and developing leaders. One reason why it is important for parties to have a large and healthy membership base is the need to form and recruit leaders. Membership provides 'warm bodies' to

Figure 15. The growth of party membership and resources[94]

	Cumulative % change in membership between the beginning of the of the 1960s and the end of the 1980s	Cumulative % change in number of staff employed by parties between late 1960s and late 1980s	Cumulative % change in income of party central offices between 1975 and 1990
Austria	-5%	+61%	+286%
Belgium	**+40%**	**na**	**na**
Denmark	−56%	112%	50%
Finland	**+1%**	**+55%**	**+6%**
Germany	+90%	+268%	+35%
Ireland	**na**	**+330%**	**+123%**
Italy	+2%	140%	−25%
Netherlands	**−50%**	**+17%**	**+41%**
Norway	+16%	+50%	+14%
Sweden	**+19%**	**+55%**	**−4%**
UK	−56%	+24%	+46%

occupy official positions both inside and beyond the party. Even in a small country like Finland (population five million), more than 55,000 people are required by parties to sit on party internal boards; over 60,000 to stand as candidates in municipal elections; 31,000 for parish council elections; and over 300,000 to occupy 'positions of trust' in the local administration.[93] The number of people needed for larger countries is far higher (the UK is arguably an exception because of the very high ratio of citizens to representative positions). There are periodical outbursts of complaints about the falling calibre of politicians, but political parties have proved almost uniquely successful at forming and sustaining elites.

How can we build multinational parties?
Are multinational parties really a viable project?

'Genuine European Parties? Not in my lifetime! Not in yours!'
Lord Whitty, Labour's European coordinator, September 1996[95]

Lord Whitty's response to my question about the future of Party Federations is typical of the scepticism felt, even by practitioners, on the future of Euro-partier,. Commentators argue that as political cultures have been locked in the nation state, parlies have developed to reflect national cultures rather than transcendental values. German Christian Democrats, they claim, are very different creatures from British Conservatives and the aims of Swedish Social Democrats are at odds with those of Greek Socialists.

In spite of the survival of national cultures, however, there are striking similarities between the parties contesting national elections. The fact that there are very different electoral systems in operation has prevented total congruence, but the same parties are represented in all European Countries: Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Liberals, Greens, the far right, former Communists and regional separatists. Across the continent, many of the schisms that inspired politics in the early years of parliamentary democracy, such as those based on religion, have subsided, leaving the left-right cleavage as the predominant one. The rise of the far right, Green politics and separatism has also occurred across the continent.

One way to test this apparent convergence is to examine the 'fit' between national parties and transnational groupings in the European Parliament. A perfect fit between the two systems would depend on three criteria being satisfied, so that:

○ each national party will be a member of one of the transnational groups
○ each European group will have one party member from each European nation
○ no two parties from a given nation will register with the same group.

According to the first criterion there is a good fit. Five hundred and forty of the 567 MEPs are affiliated to a party group. The group system in the European Parliament reflects not only the traditional left-right divide, but also caters for newer cleavages–neatly mirroring national systems.

The second and third criteria are, however, more problematic. Apart from the two big groups, the PES and the EPP, no groups in the European Parliament attract members from all member states. In fact, no single country has MEPs in all of the European parliamentary groups. This does not necessarily have dramatic implications, since all the European parliamentary delegations are considerably smaller than national ones. Even large countries have only 87 members (except Germany with 99), so it is not altogether surprising that not all parties manage to secure representation. The fact that the third criterion is not fulfilled is more problematic. Forcing competing national parties into the same groups at a European level can produce real distortions of people's voting intentions and can result in strange bedfellows within the party groups. In 1989, Luxembourg and Greece were the only countries with only one national party in each parliamentary group (even in the UK, both the Labour Party and the Northern Irish SDLP are members of the PES). In France and Italy there were as many as four or five national parties in a single group. This situation has, however, dramatically improved with the 1994 elections. Now five countries have a perfect fit, and only Italy and Spain have more than two national parties in a single group.

A further distortion is caused by the fact that some of the parties in the European Parliament are not national but regional parties. Thus in 1994, the Scottish Nationalists, the South Tirolians, the Catalonian CDC-CIU and the Vlaams Blok in Belgium all entered the European Parliament. None of these groups happily fits into meaningful multinational parties. This is problematic for the formation of a European political party system. But, one should remember that these parties also have a vexed position in national parliaments where they find it equally difficult to fit into the conventional divisions. These parties all field candidates in elections because of their problematic relations with national governments and nation states. They share strong support for European integration, which they do not find threatening. As Europe becomes more important and develops a political system of its own, tensions within the nation state will begin to subside. This is what happened in France under the Fifth Republic when many small aggrieved regional parties gradually gave way to national parties.

Ultimately, it is impossible to argue that the survival of national political cultures has made European political systems more different than similar. Most parties in Europe belong to well established families with a relatively coherent ethos. They share the same ways of doing, thinking and talking about things. Above all many of the traditional boundaries to cross-national contact are disappearing.

Cost. One of the main barriers to cross-national contact has been the prohibitive cost of travel. This meant that only a very small elite within the parties could have sporadic contact with activists and elites in other countries. New technology means that regular contact is now possible without meeting or incurring the major costs associated with transnational travel. Parties are increasingly using new media to contact each other. Members of the youth wings of European parties are developing contact on email–taking advantage of the free access afforded by universities and other educational institutions. Contacts at higher levels are also being developed on the Internet. These trends are set to increase in volume and intensity.

Languages. Inability to communicate is still a serious barrier but is gradually crumbling. Fifty one per cent of EU citizens still don't speak a second language well enough to take part in a conversation. However, over one third of Europeans now claim to speak English (as a foreign language) well enough to conduct a conversation, 15 per cent claim to speak French, 9 per cent German and 5 per cent Spanish. There is also a striking intergenerational shift with young people learning languages at school and honing their language skills through foreign travel.

Culture. The culture of political parties and activism is also rapidly converging as parties develop similar patterns of internal organisation. Katz and Maier drew the following conclusions from their study of European party organisation: 'The parties are beginning to look more and more like one another in terms of organisational character and style and, to the extent that rules and procedures which govern party life also become more and more similar across national boundaries

(not least through the internationalisation of Saatchi and Saatchi's campaigning techniques), we can also anticipate a more pronounced pattern of transnational convergence.'[96]

All dressed up with nowhere to go? What will multinational political parties do?

Some people have argued that there is no role for political parties at a European level until there is a genuine EU government. Sophisticated versions of the argument do not just attribute the redundancy of parties to the, absence of an institutional playground for them to exercise on. They claim that until the EU is more like a nation state, the main lines of division will be according to national interest rather than socioeconomic concerns. If the divisions are not socioeconomic there is literally nothing that political parties can contribute.

This argument dangerously misses the point. There are two clear models of party development. One views party development as the ultimate conclusion to a process of federal institution - building. An alternative view sees parties emerging from critical conjunctures that arise during the process of system-building.[97] While it is true that divisions according to national interest will never disappear – or even play a subordinate role – until a genuinely supranational government is formed, that does not mean that socioeconomic divisions will not arise. The increasing politicisation of the EU has meant that questions of distribution of socioeconomic resources and values have come increasingly to the fore – and the absence of political parties means that they are not adequately articulated.

What of the institutional constraints? It is clear that in the consensual structure of the Council of Ministers, a formal government and opposition cannot be created. However, even without that, the EU already has a supranational legislative system and, in the Council of Ministers and European Council, bodies that play the role of a European government in many areas. Party federations can set the socioeconomic agenda within the present institutional framework by structuring political alliances and alignments at EU summit meetings. The slow move to a party-driven council began, as we have seen, with

the preparations for the negotiation and ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. As the Union integrates further, the incentives for political parties to organise at a European level will become stronger.

If we want socioeconomic divisions to be discussed and articulated we cannot depend on alterations to the EU institutional framework. What is needed is a revolution in the organisation of transnational parties. The establishment of a European party bureaucracy, the possibility of political tourism for middle-level party elites, and an internal organisation that makes it possible to develop, mobilise internal support for and implement a specific programme. For this to happen, two requirements need to be met. First, the party federations must be able to propose fairly specific socioeconomic policies which represent credible alternatives. Second, an organisational link is needed to connect party federations to the electorate as well as to governmental actors in the national and European arenas.

These steps do not imply replicating existing national structures at a European level. Rather they recognise that while over the last fifty years, we have pooled much of the power and sovereignty of national governments, we have not adequately pooled the structures that regulate the enforcement of power or ensured that people have a say in how power is used. If the parties can come to dominate the Council rather than national priorities, public priorities are likely to be less distorted on crucial socioeconomic issues.

How could this be achieved? In what follows I suggest seven steps to a party-driven Europe that require no change to EU institutions:

1. Devise a serious programme at an EU level. To develop a serious programme, party federations will need drafting committees made up of sufficiently high calibre national officials to make specific policy compromises that national parties will support. Simon Hix even suggests that prior to the adoption of programmes delegates to Euro-party congresses should be mandated by their national party European Affairs Committees. This would force middle-level elites to tackle EU issues.

2. Make programmes adopted at congresses binding on national parties. Once the programme is binding there are sanctions that can be applied on member parties which fail to abide by the programme o national party leaders will have an incentive to mobilise support for their supranational commitments. When the programme is implemented, all party representatives in national parliaments, governments and oppositions and the European Parliament will have to be accountable to a supranational party executive body.

3. Sit ministers in council meetings according to party alignment rather than alphabetical order. This simple, easily enforceablemeasure could fundamentally change the ethos of meetings of the European Council and Council of Ministers.

4. National ministers for European Affairs based in Brussels. This would provide a political slant to all discussions and mark a recognition of the importance of the EU to national decision making. Hopefully their presence and career aspirations will force higher salience issues on to the agenda.

5. Set up a legislative training college for all MPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates. If we ensure that elected national politicians understand European and national decision making they will be able to hold their executives to account.

6. Require ministers and COREPER officials to appear in front of parliamentary committees. This would provide a measure of accountability for the activities of ministers and officials in Brussels.

7. Change the National Curriculum to include an EU element. Giving people an understanding of how decisions are made will make it possible for voters to hold their representatives to account.

These changes would require no alteration to the EU's institutional framework. They would, however, require a huge change in the relations between national parties, the transnational federations and party

groups in the European Parliament. The federations would formally control both the membership and policy of the groups, as well as being able to impose sanctions on the national parties. Some of these proposals may seem limited, but cumulatively they should begin to shift cultures of decision making in the EU, allow greater accountability and give parties more say in EU decision making.

What are the incentives for current politicians to make the change?

That a change in the culture of EU policy making would produce healthier politics will not be enough to enlist the enthusiastic support of politicians. Why, then, should they see it as in their interests to go down this route?

The first and most powerful incentive is that many of the policies that voters see as priorities can be better achieved at a European level. Whether the goal is stable economic policies, harmonised immigration rules, environmental improvement or the provision of mobility and employment rights, there is a strong case for seeing European action as a necessary condition for success. What is more, such policies will probably only be implemented if there is a more partisan Council of Ministers because it will be difficult to build coalitions along other lines.

Secondly, the nature of the Community has subtly, but fundamentally, changed in recent years. Since 1990, when money, war and Welfare appeared on the agenda, the European integration project has looked more like a classic seventeenth century exercise in state-building. Decisions about these issues lend themselves more naturally to partisan divisions.

The third incentive will come with the enlargement of the EU. This will fundamentally change the rules of engagement as institutions are adapted to accommodate new members. With greater flexibility, more majority voting, smaller blocking minorities and more countries around the table, member states will find it increasingly difficult to get their own way. This will mean that the national interest division will subside organically as national interests become more diverse, more difficult to define and harder to defend.

Finally there are the possibilities of political tourism. If a figure with gravitas such as Helmut Kohl saw becoming president of a transnational party as a logical conclusion to his national career – omething which is not unimaginable – a precedent would be set which would endow the job with real power. Party administrations would develop the clout they would need to function effectively and the new jobs it would create would provide a powerful incentive for politicians to support the creation of a Euro-party system.

The need for incentives may not be an issue in many countries. In Belgium, for example, having ceased to be Prime Minister after twelve years, Wilfried Martens was happy to seek election to the European Parliament, where he became leader of the EPP.

What will multinational parties look like?

The United States and India provide the most relevant models for the formation of a European transnational political system. The activities of the parties in these large federal countries and the shapes they have taken provide us with an intimation of the future shape of multinational parties in Europe, as well as pointing to the elements that will have to be in place to sustain them. The overriding challenges for would-be architects of multinational parties are how to get voters to think multinationally and how to get multinational politicians. These two challenges have been dealt with by sticking to simple principles.

Pork for the people. For a party to succeed at a transnational level, it must rely on the former American congressman Tip O'Neill's famous dictum that 'all politics is local'. Supranational politics, if it is to enjoy public support, cannot forget its origins. Parties must see supranational institutions as an opportunity to deliver for people at a local level as well as developing a strategic programme for the whole continent.

Jobs for the boys and girls. If you want a multinational party, you need multinational politicians. In order to achieve this, there must be powerful incentives for politicians to abandon their traditional stamping

ground and move to a new level. This would mean the development of a heavyweight party bureaucracy at a European level, with the power to impose sanctions on national parties.

Coherence of ethos. Transnational parties need a clear and coherent ethos to develop a recognisable brand name.

Flexible friends. A Euro-party would have to combine coherence of ethos with flexibility on policy issues. This would have to be institutionalised for parties to survive asymmetric shocks – such as a fishing crisis. Euro-parties will have a hard inside and a soft outside – looking more like the Greens than the Socialists at a national level.

How will Euro-parties differ from Euro-federations?

There is a big debate about what constitutes a political party as opposed to a federation or confederation. Should it have a single leader? Should it select candidates centrally? Does it depend on a unified electoral system? It is impossible to know how centralised multinational parties will be, but any viable attempt will include a core of centralised activities. I suggest that the functional minimum would include:

Many leaders, one voice. The transnational party would not necessarily have a single leader. It could be based on the American model where different people lead the party in different fora (leader in the senate, house of representatives, president and so on). The party would, however, require a single spokesperson to front the party in the media and develop as a figurehead for the party.

A single budget. Euro-parties must be financially secure and independent of national parties and other institutions if they are to function effectively.

A single membership. If a party is to develop a recognisable image, it must be possible for people to join it directly – and for the party to

communicate with them directly. This would mean that there would have to be a centralised membership list.

Many elections, a single strategic programme. Many people have argued that there can only be unified election campaigns if the electoral systems are unified. But this is by no means an operational requirement for multinational parties. Both India and the United States sustain various different electoral systems and parties maintain a certain autonomy in state elections. In Europe, it is inevitable that parties will continue to campaign on national issues, but it is important that this is supplemented with a powerful strategic programme for Europe.

What sort of practices should a Euro-party enshrine?

It's good to talk. Direct communication with members and between members must be one of the most important aims. Particularly in countries like the UK, there are powerful arguments for avoiding the distorting medium of the national press. Many parties have already developed the use of direct mailshots. They should now turn their attentions to the Internet, so that members can have regular, direct and up-to-date information. They could develop new interactive practices such as Internet Question Time for party members. The priorities should be widening and deepening people's understanding of Europe–forcing them to think outside national boundaries. Examples of good practice abound already. The Future of Europe Trust, a cross-party group based in the House of Commons, organises exchanges, conferences and contact between young politicians, leading businesses and academics from across Europe. Some MEPs perform similar functions with their annual ECU 3,000 information allowance. For example, Phillip Whitehead, MEP for Staffordshire East and Derby, has used his allowance to subsidise visits by local activists of European Institutions. Taking over 100 constituency activists to Brussels or Strasbourg every year for four days, he claims that 'there will not be a single activist in the constituency who has not visited a Euro-institution by the end of the parliamentary term'. He also frequently invites foreign colleagues to give seminars in the North Midlands and is

organising a video by MEPs in Derbyshire to show at constituency meetings and in schools.

Euro-culture. The development of a distinctive culture around the Euro-parties would also be an exciting project. In the UK, political parties have traditionally been very poor at providing anything more than meetings and the opportunity to canvass at local and national elections for their members. In many European countries, the political party has formed the centre of a rich nexus of social, cultural and educational contact. European parties will be able to use Europe-wide communications media and a single membership list to assist them in this quest. Already many parties are providing more services for their membership such as credit cards, health and life insurance, etc. If parties are imaginative they could even develop schemes through which members from different countries could exchange houses for the holidays.

Conclusion: une Europe des partis?

What is the alternative to a party-driven Europe? The consequences of turning the European Union into a merely intergovernmental framework are well known. They would include a potential unravelling of the single market and, arguably, more intense and bitter struggles between national governments. The other alternative would be to push forward with European integration irrespective of public support or legitimacy. Norman Lamont has summed up this approach effectively: 'The idea of Europe is more important even than democracy. That was shown to the rest of the world in the way the Danes had to correct their "mistake" after voting against Maastricht in their first referendum.' Such a strategy is equally likely to end in tears, with mounting public distrust and institutional failure.

The strategy I have proposed, of steadily developing parties at a multinational level, offers the only coherent way of linking increasingly well-educated citizens with the institutions acting in their name. Far from entailing the abandonment of sovereignty, it would involve the exercise of sovereignty. In fact more sovereignty has been lost by refusing to admit that it has been pooled than by the signature of any treaty. In the past, when political parties have organised at a European level, they have been in touch with people's aspirations and usually more in touch than anyone else. Despite their problems, no other institutions have emerged which can deliver what parties deliver: reconciling

multiple interests, setting out long-term strategies, implementing deci-
sions and legitimating them, and providing a channel of communica-
tion from the bottom to the top. In short, a European future without
European parties does not add up.

Acknowledgements

The arguments advanced in this pamphlet are the fruit of several months of intensive research including literature reviews and interviews in the UK and in Brussels with MPs, MEPs, journalists, academics, party staff, lobbyists, pressure groups, non-profit organisations and local government. I am particularly grateful to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for supporting the research that went into this publication. A special debt of gratitude is also owed to the readers who trawled through an earlier draft of this pamphlet and supplied invaluable insights and comments in a very limited time: George Brock, Managing Editor at *The Times:* Dr Geoffrey Edwards. Director of the Centre for International Studies at Cambridge University and author of *The European Commission;* Professor Andrew Gamble from the Political and Economic Research Centre at Sheffield University and joint editor of *Regionalism and the World Order*; Charles Grant, defence correspondent at *The Economist* and author of *Jacques Delors: Inside the House that Jacques Built*; Dr Simon Hix of LSE and joint author of *Political Parties in the EU*; Graham Leicester of The Constitution Unit and Scottish Council Foundation; Dennis Macshane MP; Roger Liddle, Director of Prima Europe, European policy adviser to the Prime Minister and joint author of *The Blair Revolution*; Professor David Marquand, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford University; Matthew Sowemimo, Research Director of the European Movement; Anthony Teasdale, special adviser to Kenneth Clarke and joint author

of *The Penguin Guide to the European Union*. Thanks are also due to Geoff Mulgan, Perri 6 and Tom Bentley at Demos for continual advice and assistance. But above all to Jamie Coulthard for labouring over successive drafts with me–sometimes till the early hours of the morning.

I would like to pay a tribute to the many who agreed to be interviewed or supplied me with material, advice and direction during the course of the project. The list is far from exhaustive but points to those to whom I am most indebted: Tom Arnold, Local Government International Bureau; Dr David Baker, Nottingham Trent University; Dr Veraon Bogdanor, Oxford University; Dr John Bennington, Warwick University; Tom Beumer, Party of European Socialists: Roger Casale MP; Dr Chalmers, London School of Economics; David Clark, special adviser to Robin Cook; Richard Corbett MEP, Party of European Socialists; Phillipe Cordery, ECOSY; Professor Alan Dashwood, Cambridge University European Legal Centre; Ian Davidson, Davidson Monahon Partnership; Andrew Duff, Federal Trust; Anthoine Fobe, Euro-Citizen Action Service; Bob Fryer, Northern College; Joseph Gallacher, Local Government International Bureau; Dr David Goldblatt, Open University; Dr Brian Harvey; Tom Jenkins, TUC; Graham Leicester, Constitution Unit; Calum Macdonald MP; Charles Marquand; Dr Sonia Mazey, Cambridge University; Dr John Peterson, Strathclyde University; Dr Ben Rosamund, Warwick University; Maartje Ruttens, Centre for European Policy Studies; Dr Jeremy Richardson, Essex University; Vijay Ranjangaran, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Dr Patrick Seyd, Sheffield University; Julian Shatterthwaite, Liberal Democrats; Phillip Whitehead MEP; Lord Whitty, Labour Party; Martin Westlake, European Commission.

I am especially grateful to Matthew Sowemimo and the European Movement for providing me with unpublished MORI opinion data and to Gordon Heald of Opinion Research Business for giving me access to opinion data commissioned by the European Commission.

Finally I must thank my parents, Dick and Irene Leonard, to whom this volume is dedicated, for 22 years of unstinting intellectual and emotional support.

Naturally all the usual disclaimers apply.

Mark Leonard
July 1997

Glossary of Acronyms

BSE	Bovine Spongiform-Encephalopathy
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union
CEDG	European chemical industries umbrella group
CET	Common European Tariff
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COPA	Committee d'Organisations Professionelles d'Agriculture
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
COSAC	Committee of European Affairs Committees
DGB	Deutsche Gewerkschafts Bund
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EDC	European Defence Community
EDF	European Development Fund
EC	European Community
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECOFIN	European Economic and Finance Ministers Council
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Committee
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EEC	European Economic Community
EFGP	European Federation of Green Parties

EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ELDR	European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EPLP	European Parliamentary Labour Party
EPP	European People's Party
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERM	Exchange Rate Mechanism
ESF	European Social Fund
ESPRIT	European Strategic Programme for Research and Development in Information Technology
ETUC	European Trade Union Congress
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FIFG	Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance
G7	Group of seven most industrialised nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IGC	Inter-Governmental Conference
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JHA	Justice and Home and Affairs
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PES	Party of European Socialists
PHARE	Poland and Hungary – aid for economic restructuring
PQ	Parliamentary Question
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party

TACIS   Programme of technical assistance to the
           Commonwealth of Independent States
TUC   Trade Union Congress
UKREP   United Kingdom Representation to the European Union
UN   United Nations
UNCTAD   United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
           Organisation
UNICE   Union of Industrial and Employers Associations
WTO   World Trade Organisation

Select bibliography

6 P and Vidal I, 1994, *Delivering welfare: repositioning non-profit and cooperative action in Western European welfare states*, CIES, Barcelona.

Andersen S and Eliassen K, 1996, *The European Union: how democratic is it?*, Sage, London.

Anderson P and Cammiller P, 1994, *Mapping the West European Left*, Verso, London.

Angeli F, 1991, Social Europe: in search of a common culture, Censis, Rome.

Baker D, Gamble A, Ludlam S, Seawright D, 1995, 'A "rosy" map of Europe? Labour parliamentarians and European integration initial survey results', paper presented to 'Britain and Europe, Panel 2' at the Political Studies Association annual conference, Glasgow.

Bardi L, 1996, 'Transnational trends in European parties and the 1994 elections of the European Parliament' in *Party Politics*, vol 2, no 1, 99–114.

Bond M, Smith J, and Wallace W, 1996, *Eminent Europeans*, Greycoat Press, London.

Bright C, 1995, *The EU: understanding the Brussels process*, Wiley, London.

Butler D and Westlake M, 1995, *British politics and European elections 1994*, Macmillan, London.

Butler D, 1979, 'Public opinion and Community membership', in *The Political Quarterly*, vol 50.

Claeys PH and Loeb-Mayer N, 1979, 'Trans-European party groupings: emergence of new and alignment of old parties in the light of the direct elections to the European Parliament' in *Government and Opposition*, vol 14, no 4, 455–479.

Corbett R, Jacobs F and Shackleton M, 1996, *The European Parliament*, Cartermill, London.

Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the EC, *History of the Confederation*, Brussels, undated.

Denman R, 1996, *Missed chances*, Cassell, London.

Dedman, M, 1996, *The origins and development of the European Union*, 1945–95, Routledge, London.

Downs A, 1957, *An economic theory of democracy*, Harper, London.
Duff A, 1997, *Reforming the European Union*, Federal Tust, London.

Duff A, 1996, *Electoral reform of the European Parliament*, Federal Trust, London.

Duff A, 1994, 'Building a parliamentary Europe' in *Government and Opposition*, vol 29, no 2, 147–165.

Elles J, 1992, 'Comment on "Assessing MEP Influence on British EC Policy" by Stafford Thomas' in *Government and Opposition*, vol 27, no l, 19–23.

Gaffney J, ed, 1996, *Political parties and the European Union*, Routledge, London.

Gamble A and Payne A, 1996, *Regionalism and world order*, Macmillan, London.

George S, 1990, *An awkward partner*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Giddings P and Drewry G, 1996, *Westminster and Europe: the impact of the European Union on the Westminster parliament*, London, Macmillan.

Goldblatt D, 1995, 'The paradox of power: globalisation and national government' in *Missionary Government, Demos Quarterly*, issue 7.

Guehenno J-M, 1995, *The end of the nation state*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Grant C, 1994, *Delors: inside the house that Jacques built*, Nicholas Brealey, London.

Jowell R, Curtice J, Park A, Brook L and Thomson K, 1997, *British social attitudes: the thirteenth report*, Social and Community Planning Research and Dartmouth Publishing, London.

Harvey B, 1995, *Networking in Europe*, NCVO Publications, London. Hirst P and Thomson, 1994, *Globalisation in question*, Polity Press, London.

Hix S, 1995, 'Parties at a European level and the legitimacy of EU socioeconomic policy' in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, December.

Hix S, 1994, *History of the party of European Socialists*, manuscript. Hix S and Lord C, 1997, *Political parties in the EU*, Macmillan, London. Holmes M, ed, 1997, *The Eurosceptic reader*, Macmillan, London.

Katz R and Maier P, 1992, *Party organisations: a data handbook on party organisations in Western democracies*, 1960–90, Sage, London.

Katz R and Maier P, 1995, *How parties organize: adaptation and change in party organisations in Western democracies*, Sage, London.

Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991, *The new European Community: decision making and institutional change*, Westview, Boulder.

Landau A and Whitman R, 1997, *Rethinking the European Union: institutions, interests and identities*, Macmillan, London.

Leonard D, 1996, *The Economist guide to the European Union*, The Economist, London.

Mather G and Himes W, 1996, *Britain's relationship with the EU*, EPF, London.

Mazey S and Richardson J, 1993, *Lobbying in the European Community*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Millward AS, 1992, *The European rescue of the nation state*, Routledge, London.

Northcott J, 1995, *The future of Britain and Europe*, Policy Studies Institute, London.

Nugent N, 1995, *The government and politics of the European Union*, third edition, Macmillan, London.

Pridham G and P, 1981, *Transnational party cooperation and European integration*, George Allen and Unwin, London.

Railings C, Farrel D, Denver D, and Broaghton D, 1995, *British elections and parties yearbook*, Frank Cass, London.

Reiter H, 1989, 'Party decl ne in the West: a sceptic's view' in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol 1, no 3, 325–348.

Rosamond B, 1993, 'National labour organisations and European integration: British trade unions and "1992"' in *Political Studies*, vol 41, 420–434.

Rosamond B, 1996, *The integration of labour? British trade union attitudes to European integration*, manuscript.

Schattschneider EE, 1960, *The semi-sovereign people: a realist's view of democracy in America*, Dryden Press, Hinsdale, USA.

Smith J, 1995, *The voice of the people: the European Parliament in the 1990s*, The Royal Institute for International Affairs, London.

Central Statistical Office, 1997, *Social Trends 27*, Central Statistical Office, London.

de Swaan A, 1992, 'Perspectives for transnational social policy' in *Government and Opposition*, vol 27, no 1, 33–52.

Thatcher M, 1995, *The Downing Street years*, HarperCollins, London.

Thomas TS, 1992, 'Assessing MEP influence on British EC policy' in *Government and Opposition*, vol 27, no 1, 3–19.

Weidenfeld W, ed, 1994, *Europe '96: reforming the European Union*, Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, Gutersloh, Germany.

Westlake M, 1996, *The Council of the European Union*, Cartermill, London.

Wilkinson H and Mulgan G, 1995, *Freedom's children: work, relationships and politics for 18–34 year olds in Britain today*, Demos, London.

Endnotes

1   Hirst and Thomson, 1994, *Globalisation in question*, Polity Press, London.
2   World Bank, *1995 Annual report*.
3   Bank for International Settlements, *1995 Annual report*.
4   Forecasts by McKinsey Consulting.
5   Goldblatt D, 1995, 'The paradox of power: globalisation and national government' in *Missionary Government, Demos Quarterly*, issue 7.
6   See note 5.
7   It is true that the UN and many of these bodies were not developed as a response to globalisation (many pre-date it), but they have been given a new lease of life and expanded activities as a result of globalisation. If they hadn't existed in a globalised world they would have had to be invented.
8   Peter Sutherland, interviewed in *New Statesman and Society*, 18 October 1996.
9   This is why the Franco-German alliance was seen as the key to an institutional framework that would neutralise the territorial ambitions and aggressive nationalism of all states.
10 This might seem to be unfair to the undoubted idealism of Jean Monnet, but seems to be borne out in analyses of the official papers in France and Germany (see Milward AS, 1992, *The European rescue of the nation state*, Routledge, London).
11 Lord Tebbit, speech to Conservative activists, London, 1997.
12 Lord Bridge, *Factortame Ltd and others v Secretary of State for Transport*, House of Lords, April 1989–October 1990.
13 Select Committee on European Legislation 24th Report, House of Commons Session 1994/5, *The 1996 Intergovernmental Conference: the agenda, democracy and efficiency and the role of national parliaments* 239/1, xxiv.
14 DTI, 1994, *Review of the implementation and enforcement of EC law in the UK*, 1994 Efficiency scrutiny report, DTI, London, para 1 4.14.
15 Nugent, N, 1995, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, Macmillan, London.

16 Interview with Vijay Ranjangaran, FCO IGC unit, August 1996.

17 See note 16.

18 See note 16.

19 Interview with Graham Leicester, former FCO civil servant, March 1997.

20 See note 19.

21 See note 19.

22 See note 19.

23 Interview with Martin Westlake, European Commission, November 1996.

24 The surveyors failed to identify anyone who supported this proposition at the time of the survey and therefore did not put the question.

25 Figures for 1994/95 Parliamentary session, House of Commons Library.

26 See note 25.

27 Baker D, Gamble A, Ludlam S and Seawright D, 1995, 'A "rosy" map of Europe? Labour parliamentarians and European integration initial survey results', paper presented to 'Britain and Europe, panel 2' at the Political Studies Association annual conference, Glasgow; and Baker D, Fountain I, Gamble A and Ludlam S, 1995, 'The blue map of Europe: Conservative parliamentarians and European integration' in Railings C, Farrel D, Denver D and Broughton D, 1995, *British elections and parties yearbook*, Frank Kass, London.

28 John Major, *Hansard*, 12 November 1996, vol 285.

29 Gillian Shephard, *Hansard*, 7 July 1992, vol 211, col 175.

30 See note 28.

31 Sir James Goldsmith, Referendum Party, undated speech.

32 This was the tone of even John Smith's speeches during the Maastricht debates in the 1992–93 Parliamentary session.

33 See note 32.

34 Kenneth Clarke, *Hansard*, 25 November 1996, vol 286.

35 1994–95 Parliamentary Session, House of Commons Library.

36 Though Martin Westlake claims that most national officials would estimate that it is more like 98 per cent if they were speaking off the record.

37 Westlake M, 1996, *The Council of the European Union*, Cartermill, London, 181–182.

38 Hix S in Gaffney, J, ed, 1996, *Political parties and the European Union*, Routledge, London, 308–332.

39 Thatcher M, 1995, *The Downing Street years*, HarperCollins, London.

40 Interview with Simon Hix, London School of Economics.

41 Figure is for 1994. See Corbett, R, Jacobs F and Shackleton M, 1996, *The European Parliament*, Cartermill, London.

42 Interview with Phillip Whitehead MEP, October 1996.

43 Interview with Francis Jacobs, European Parliament, July 1997.

44 Glyn Ford MEP, CEPS Meeting, Brussels, 8 October 1996.

45 Interview with Lord Whitty, September 1996.

46 Hix S, 1995, 'Parties at a European level and the legitimacy of EU socioeconomic policy' in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, December.

47 See note 46.

48 See note 42.

49 Interview with Dr Sonia Mazey, Cambridge University, August 1996.

50 Lynn Collie, Assistant Head of the Brussels office of the CBI, writing in Mazey S and Richardson J, 1993, *Lobbying in the European Community*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

51 UNICE,1984, *Memorandum to the New Commission*, UNICE, Brussels.

52 Tony Benn, *Hansard*, 18 May 1989, 117.

53 Interview with Tom Jenkins, TUC Head of European Affairs, September 1996.

54 John Bennington, 1996, *The Europeanisation of local governance: the significance of transnational networks?*, Seminar on local governance, London.

55 6 P and Forder J E, 1994, 'Non-profit trade in the European Single Market' in 6 P and Vidal I, eds, *Delivering welfare: repositioning non-profit and cooperative action in western European welfare states*, CIES, Barcelona.

56 See note 55.

57 Opinion Research Business, 1997, *Britain and the EU: what people think*, ORB, London, unpublished data.

58 See note 57.

59 Directorate General X, 1996, *Eurobarometer: public opinion in the European Union*, report no 44, European Commission, Brussels.

60 See note 59. Processed by the author.

61 See note 57.

62 European Commission, 1996, *General report on the activities of the European Union in 1995*, EC, Brussels.

63 See note 62.

64 European Movement data in *Britain and the European Union*, MORI research study, August 1996, unpublished.

65 Duff A, 1996, *Electoral reform of the European Parliament*, Federal Trust, London.

66 See note 57.

67 See note 64.

68 See note 57.

69 See note 59.

70 Jowell R, Curtice J, Park A, Brook L and Thomson K, 1997, *British social attitudes: the thirteenth report*, Social and Community Planning Research and Dartmouth Publishing, London

71 See note 59.

72 See note 59.

73 See note 59.

74 See note 59.

75 See note 59.

76 See note 59.

77 See note 57.

78 See note 64.

79 David Butler, 1979, 'Public opinion and community membership' in *The Political Quarterly*, vol 50,151–156.

80 *The Economist*, 14 June 1975, cited in Bond M, Smith J and Wallace W, 1996, *Eminent Europeans*, Greycoat Press, London.

81 See note 64.

82 Jupp B, 1995,'The grey and the good' in *Missionary Government, Demos Quarterly*, issue 7.

83 See note 57.

84 See note 57.

85 See note 57.

86 See note 57.

87 Wilkinson H and Mulgan G, 1995, *Freedom's children: work, relationships and politics for 18–34 year olds in Britain today*, Demos, London.

88 Central Statistical Office, 1997, *Social trends 27*, CSO, London.

89 See note 88.

90 Reiter, 1989, 'Party Decline in the West: a sceptic's view' in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol 1, no 3, 325–348.

91 The classic academic text is Downs A, 1957, *An economic theory of democracy*, Harper, London.

92 Katz R and Maier P, 1992, *Party organisations: a data handbook on party organisations in Western democracies, 1960–90*, Sage, London.

93 See note 92.

94 See note 92.

95 See note 45.

96 See note 92.

97 The Congress Parry in India is an example of a party arising prior to the creation of a nation.