

Report on The Next 50 Years Academic Conference

Posted on Friday 11th July 2008

The Institute of European Law at Birmingham Law School played host to over 70 scholars from the United Kingdom and ten other countries for the recent conference "The Next 50 Years: The Future of European Law & Policy." The conference on European law & policy in context was held from 3-4 July 2008.



Motivation

50 years ago, on 1st January 1958, the European Economic Community (EEC) Treaty entered into force and laid the foundations of the current framework of European integration. Together with the European Coal and Steel Community (1953) and Euratom (also 1958) the EEC formed the "European Communities" which the United Kingdom joined in 1973 and helped to develop into the European Union in 1992. These Communities formed a new and unprecedented legal order of international law and their 50th anniversary was in itself enough reason to organise a major conference on European law and policy.

Opening session

The conference opened with a plenary session consisting of a keynote address and four invited papers. The keynote address was delivered by the former judge

at the European Court of Justice (1992-2004) **Professor Sir David Edward** (<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/staff/96.aspx>) of the University of Edinburgh in which he focussed on the implications of the recent referendum in the Republic of Ireland. This was followed by **Professor Panos Koutrakos** (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/law/aboutus/law-school-staff/person-details.html?personKey=HYxMjVxaA9YhZcT6DD8PQROiGHsVqq&type=acad>) of the School of Law of the University of Bristol on "EU International Relations under the Treaty of Lisbon" providing an overview over the changes of the Treaty of Lisbon and on how some of them can be achieved even without that Treaty entering into force. Then **Professor Michael Dougan** (<http://www.liv.ac.uk/law/staff/index.htm>) of the Liverpool Law School of the University of Liverpool) spoke on "Lisbon's Contribution to the Place of the Individual in the Union", focussing on the new citizens' initiative. The lawyer's perspective was complemented by the perspective of two political scientists. Professor Anand Menon, (then) Director of the European Research Institute at the University of Birmingham spoke on "Supranationalism: A Framework for Analysis?" This paper was the result of research conducted in cooperation with **Stephen Weatherill** (http://www.competition-law.ox.ac.uk/members/profile.php?lecturer_code=weatherills) from the University of Oxford. The session concluded with a presentation of **Professor Thomas Diez** (<http://www.midas.bham.ac.uk/Thomas.htm>), Head of the School of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Birmingham on "Is the EU a Normative Power? Does it Matter?"

Workshops



The conference continued with 14 workshops held on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning in which scholars of law and political science from over 11 countries presented and discussed 46 papers. The workshops dealt with the future of the European Court of Justice, the supremacy of EU law and national constitutional courts, EU citizenship, migration in Europe, EU external relations under the Lisbon Treaty, Cooperation in Police and Judicial Matters without pillars, the EU as an international actor, EU competition and procurement law and policy, and various EU policies.

Publishers and supporters

The conference was supported by **Birmingham Law School** ([/schools/law/index.aspx](http://schools/law/index.aspx)), the University of Birmingham Graduate School, **Hart Publishing** (<http://www.hartpub.co.uk/>), **Cambridge University Press** (<http://www.cambridge.org/emea/default.asp>), **Oxford University Press**

(<http://www.oup.co.uk/>), and **Routledge-Cavendish** (<http://www.routledgecavendish.com/>). A leading law publisher has expressed an interest in publishing an edited collection of a selection of papers presented at the conference.

Feedback from conference participants

"I just wanted to say thank you for a fantastic conference. I thoroughly enjoyed the panel and sessions I attended, and the food was great as well! I also had an extremely generative conversation with Thomas Diez and as such I really appreciated the inter-disciplinary component you created."

"I would like to congratulate you on the brilliant organisation of the conference: it was very interesting and extremely well prepared. I would also like to thank you for the very warm welcome on the University campus, the most impressive I have seen so far."

"Thanks for the invitation to a very interesting and hugely successful conference [!]. It was an honor to speak in the first session in such distinguished company, and the session for which I was a discussant was extremely interesting. Congratulations on organizing such a stimulating event