

Report on the 2012 Conference: Integration or Disintegration?

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Third conference on the Future of European Law and Policy Conference: *Integration or Disintegration?*



On 27-29 June 2012 the Institute of European Law welcomed almost 100 scholars and practitioners from 22 countries to a major conference on European law, policy and other subjects related to European integration.

After our 2008 ("[After the First 50 Years](#) ([/research/activity/iel/news/2008/report-next-50.aspx](#))") and 2010 ("[After Lisbon](#) ([/research/activity/iel/news/2010/after-lisbon-report.aspx](#))") conferences we decided that many of the experiences we made were good experiences and could be repeated. First, that we would have an open call for papers rather than invited speakers. Second, that we would provide feedback on the papers through discussants during the workshops. Third, that we would locate the conference in our university rather than a hotel. Normally that would be in the Birmingham Law School building – but this year our building was being renovated and therefore we relocated to the Arts Building.

Third of a series

We also always experiment a bit. The first conference in 2008 was an experiment in itself. After the second conference we produced an [edited collection](#) ([/research/activity/iel/news/2010/after-lisbon-book.aspx](#)) with the best papers fitting the "After Lisbon" topic of the conference. This year, for our 3rd conference on the future of European law and policy, we decided to grow and therefore we almost doubled to an overall of 80 papers delivered in 24 workshop sessions.

We were very happy and proud to not only to see 21 British universities represented, but also scholars from 22 countries other than the United Kingdom, from the Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium – and – this year especially from Spain, the United States, and from countries who joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Even Australia was represented.

Integration or disintegration?

A Chinese curse, which at first appears to be a blessing, says "may you live in interesting times." There is no doubt that the citizens and students of the EU currently live in interesting times: the financial crisis has rocked the political, economic and legal foundations of many of its Member States and with it of the Union. The Eurozone is in the middle of a Eurozone crisis, caused at least in part by deficiencies in its constitutional set up. While the lawyer can refer to the fact that the rules of the Treaty have not been followed, this gives little satisfaction. There is now a clear possibility of disintegration but also –with respect to the Eurozone – of fast, possibly very fast, further integration, including decisive steps towards a political union.

Opening session



(Group photo of the speakers and attendees at the conference)

George Soros said in an interview to the German journal "Der Spiegel" recently that these steps will have to be taken during the EU summit which was happening in Brussels at the same time as our conference here in Birmingham. Consequently the opening session on Thursday 28 June 2012 was entitled:

'Surviving the Crisis: Integration or Disintegration?'

After a welcome and introduction by the Director of the Institute of European Law, [Professor Martin Trybus](#) ([/staff/profiles/law/trybus-martin.aspx](#)),

[Professor Alan Dashwood](#) (<http://www.law.cam.ac.uk/people/academic/aa-dashwood/20>) (University of Cambridge) delivered a keynote address in which the current stage and future prospects of European integration were discussed – this included a discussion of what could have happened had the United Kingdom joined the common currency from the beginning. Alternatives for United Kingdom full membership in the EU were discussed, including EEA membership, Switzerland-type relations, and full re-nationalisation, including their advantages and disadvantages. Alan Dashwood was followed by [Professor Fabian Amtenbrink](#) (http://www.esl.eur.nl/profile/profiel_metis/1072454) (Erasmus University Rotterdam) who spoke on "Constitutional failings of the reform of European economic governance", [Dr. Fernando Losada](#) (<http://www.helsinki.fi/foundations/research/fernando-losada-fraga.html>) (University of Helsinki) who discussed "Institutional experimentalism in European Monetary Union and national constitutions", and finally [Dr. Aris Georgopoulos](#) (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/law/staff-lookup/aris.georgopoulos>) (University of Nottingham) who delivered a "A letter from Greece: EU demo(i)cracy in times of technocratic challenges and financial crisis?" There was a lively discussion at the end of the session when all speakers had delivered their papers.

Twenty-three workshops

The opening session was followed by 23 workshops organised in six parallel streams on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning. The workshops covered the following topics:

Workshop Sessions 1:

- 1A: The Euro Zone Crisis
- 1B: Who makes law in the EU?
- 1C: Russia and the EU
- 1D: Social rights in the EU
- 1E: Sustainability and human rights
- 1F: Internal market

Workshop Sessions 2: Thursday 28 June 2012 (4.00 - 5:30 pm)

- 2A: EU Monetary Policy
- 2B: Theory
- 2C: Africa and the EU
- 2D: Equality and non-discrimination

- 2E: Competition law I

- 2F: Withdrawal from the EU

Workshop Sessions 3:

- 3A: Multi-level relations
- 3B: Institutions and relations
- 3C: EU External Relations
- 3E: Competition Law II
- 3F: Area of Freedom Security and Justice

Workshop Sessions 4:

- 4A: Innovative thinking
- 4B: The Court of Justice
- 4C: EU enlargement
- 4D: Consumer protection
- 4E: Social affairs and the EU
- 4F: National identity and the EU

A conference dinner was held at Hornton Grange, University of Birmingham, with 70 delegates in attendance. The conference concluded with a barbecue in front of the law building (blessed by good weather). The 4th The Future of European Law and Policy Conference is planned for 2014.

Thanks

We want to thank the organiser Martin Trybus supported by Jessica Bowen and Caroline Ashton; the Selection Panel for the conference papers consisting of Martin Trybus, Luca Rubini, Martin Borowski, Marianne Wade, Katharina Möser, and Gulara Guliyeva; the workshop discussants Anthony Arnull, Fabian Amtenbrink (Rotterdam), Flora Goudappel (Rotterdam), Helena Raulus (Rotterdam), Chris Bovis (Hull), Adam Cygan (Leicester), Marianne Wade, Jean McHale, Martin Trybus, Luca Rubini, Katarzyna Wolczuk, Rilka Dragevna-Lewers (Manchester), Gulara Guliyeva, Julian Lonbay, Katharina Möser, Alexander Orakhelashvili, Dorota Leczykiewicz (Oxford), and Evelyn Ellis. We want to thank [Birmingham Law School \(/schools/law/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/law/index.aspx) for underwriting the conference, the European Research Institute Birmingham and the College of Arts and Law for substantial grants, [Edward Elgar \(http://www.e-elgar.co.uk/\)](http://www.e-elgar.co.uk/), [Sweet & Maxwell \(http://www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk/\)](http://www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk/), and [Hart \(http://www.hartpub.co.uk/\)](http://www.hartpub.co.uk/) for sponsoring, and Edward Elgar for exhibiting during the conference.

Feedback from participants



"An excellent event that was well organised and showed how broad the academic debate in Europe is today. Very many thanks for organising and I am sure we are all looking forward to the next one." Dr. Adam Cygan, Senior Lecturer, University of Leicester

"Many thanks for organising this wonderful conference." Prof. Dr. Fabian Amtenbrink, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Visiting Professor at the College of Europe (Bruges)

"It was very well organised and I very much enjoyed participating. Thank you for your effort in putting it together. I would also like to thank you for the comments you gave me during our panel on "Institutions and Relations", they will help me further reflect on the role of the European Parliament in EU external relations. The panel gave rise to a very fruitful exchange [...]." Davor Jancic, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Utrecht

"We had a very nice time and it was very useful." Javier Porras, PhD candidate

and academic assistant, Universidad CEU San Pablo, Madrid

"I wanted to thank you for organising the IEL Conference on "integration or disintegration?" with so many interesting workshops and a remarkable panel of key note speakers. It was a great experience to take part in the conference and to present my paper, especially because I received valuable comments from [Professor Jean McHale \(/staff/profiles/law/mchale-jean.aspx\)](http://staff.profiles.law.mchale-jean.aspx) and the others that were in my workshop." Dr. Andrea Beata Faeh, Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen

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