



CONFERENCE REPORT

TEPSA Pre-presidency Conference Future Prospects for the Belgian Presidency of the EU (2010): Global Challenges in a New Institutional Era¹

20 & 21 May 2010
Brussels, Belgium

The Belgian pre-presidency conference, organised by the EGE Network in collaboration with TEPSA, took place at the Fondation Universitaire, in Brussels on 20-21st May. The conference discussed the future prospects of the upcoming Belgian presidency and the Global Challenges in a new Institutional era.

After a word of welcome from the hosting organizers, *Marianne Dony* (EGE, ULB) and TEPSA's Secretary General *Jean-Paul Jacqué*, the TEPSA recommendations to the Belgian EU Council Presidency were presented by *Marjan Svetlicic* (TEPSA Board, CIR). The recommendations focused nine policy areas to where the Belgian presidency should take action upon: the Greek crisis and consequences; the EU2020 strategy; climate change; EU budget review; agriculture and natural resources; the new institutional set up in action; EU in the world; EU enlargement; and internal market.²

Representatives from the Belgian federal government, *François Roux*, and regional authorities, *Pascale Delcomminette*, shed light on the priorities of the Belgian Presidency. Although the Belgian priorities will be presented not earlier than 7th July by the Prime Minister in Strasbourg, some intentions and the general approach was shared. The Belgian Presidency intends to explore the innovations of the Lisbon Treaty to improve the effectiveness of the Union and to set a precedence. It also stressed the importance of the Community method. Preparations started two years ago and the Presidency was prepared in an inclusive manner. The Presidency will focus on ten items to be delivered before the end of the presidency with regard to the financial crisis; securing economic growth; EU action on social affairs; climate; environment and natural resources; budget review; justice and home affairs; EU's external representation; enlargement; EU's citizens. In addition the institutional framework of regional cooperation and priorities issues of regional competences were elaborated on.

Christian Franck (honorary Secretary General of TEPSA, UCL) drew up an accurate historical approach of the past Belgian presidencies, linking the patterns of the eleven previous presidencies with the upcoming presidency.³

¹ Please note that this report provides merely a summary of the discussions held during the conference. The TEPSA Secretariat would like to thank Jan Orbie, Severin Fischer, Hanna Ojanen and Michelle Comelli for their contributions to this report. The final responsibility for the content of this report lies with the TEPSA Secretariat only.

² These recommendations can be found at <http://tepsa.be/Recommendations%20to%20the%20Belgian%20Presidency.pdf>.

³ The full speech of Christian Franck can be found at: <http://tepsa.be/Speech%20Prof%20Franck%20Historical%20Overview%20of%20Belgian%20Presidencies.pdf>

Thursday Parallel Workshops

Security and Defense

The workshop on Security and Defense focused on capabilities, priorities for operations and strategy. *Gunilla Herolf* (TEPSA Board, SIPRI) stated three critical factors for progress and cooperation within the EU: the threat of total irrelevance on the world stage; the realization that we are now facing cross-boundary threats; and bad economy that also fuels the need to be more efficient and act together. In addition she named three factors that impair the cooperation in this field: that there exist so many political wills; the tendency of putting one's own country before the EU; and core groups that are defined in advance instead of being inclusive. *Jo Coelmont* (Egmont) pointed out that it was the Convention that had developed new CSDP instruments. Success is dependent on civilian capabilities on the ground; having a shared desired political end stage; and by having the strategic patience to stay until this end stage is achieved without naming an end date. What is needed is an attractive narrative. Now the instruments have been established; and the first elements of a strategy are already on the radar, too. In the end the crises will define the instruments being used and events will always dictate further cooperation in this field. *Gianni Bonvicini* (TEPSA Board, IAI) stressed the limits of the solidarity clause: it reflects the threats of the years it was formulated, and can only be activated in case of terrorist attacks or natural disasters. Its scope should be broadened to include more security risks and agreement is needed on how to activate the self-defence clause. He also pointed out the role of the European Representative as the Commander-in-Chief and the EDA as an example of strategic cooperation. *Hanna Ojanen* (TEPSA Board, SIIA) commented that the developments in this area have not necessarily unfolded in a logical order: first, there were instruments in search of missions, then missions in search of a strategy. While the Lisbon Treaty can be seen as the most innovative treaty in the area of Security and Defence, most of its innovations have already been tested in practice, and it is difficult for now to see ways to progress beyond them.

International Climate Policy between Copenhagen and Cancun

The panel on international climate policy concentrated mainly on the EU's role during the Copenhagen Climate Conference COP 15 in December 2009. Chaired by *Sebastian Oberthür* (IES-VUB), the panellist also discussed the way forward and essential elements of a future international climate protection framework. *Delia Villagrasa* (European Climate Foundation) gave an introduction to the topic, by describing the process that led to the Copenhagen Conference and analysing the main outcome, the 'Copenhagen Accord'. She also emphasised the EU's crucial role in bringing the negotiations in 2010 forward, especially by providing sufficient financial support. *Matthieu Wemaere* (IDDRI) focussed in specific issues in the negotiation context, such as the future role of the Kyoto Protocol, instruments for forest protection or adaptation to climate change. Finally, *Severin Fischer* (IEP) described the EU's strategy in the run up to Copenhagen and put forward a few suggestions how to reinvigorate the process again. In the following debate, the institutional structure of the EU in international climate negotiations and the limits of global environmental governance were discussed.

The European Union in Africa and the Mediterranean Region

This session dealt with the challenges in the European Union's relationship with African and the Mediterranean region in the area of development and migration. *Tine Van Criekinghe* (European



University Institute) sketched a comprehensive picture of the development-migration nexus in the EU's relations with Africa. She reviewed the instruments the EU has used to implement migration-related policies, the Southern views on migration, and the challenge these diverging agendas pose in terms of finding agreement on joint migration management mechanisms and the relevance of this topic in the upcoming EU-Africa summit in November 2010. *Mary Farrell* (University of Greenwich) elaborated on this upcoming summit in Tripoli, pointing out that the Belgian 'model' of dealing with complexity might be useful for this occasion. She also criticized the absence of real 'politics' in the EU-Africa dialogue, which is characterized by a rather bureaucratic approach. *Stefania Panebianco* (University of Catania) focused more specifically on the EU's relation with the Mediterranean region. She first provided an overview of the context, content and agenda of Euro-Med relations. Then, she gave a number of suggestions for the EU to play the role of a global player in the Mediterranean, while also mentioning a number of inconsistencies in the EU's current approach. Subsequently, *Emmanuel Klimis* (Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis) elaborated on the link between security and development in fragile states, with specific reference to the current draft EU Action Plan for situations of fragility and conflict. Maurizio Carbone's presentation addressed the challenges for donor coordination in Africa, with particular reference to the European Union's recent initiatives in this regard. Finally, *Rudi Brieven* (Permanent Representation Belgium) commented on the presentations from a foreign policy making perspective, with an emphasis on the challenges for the Belgian Presidency in the context of the upcoming EU-Africa summit. He emphasized that the Belgian diplomacy intends to reinstate the primacy of the EU in EU-Africa relations, instead of new donors such as China which challenge the EU's role.

The Eastern Dimension and Energy Supply

The workshop on the Eastern Dimension and Energy Supply was chaired by Bernard Snoy et d'Oppuers (Université Catholique de Louvain). Ramunas Vilpisauskas (Vilnius University), Peter Van Elsuwege (Gent university), Katrin Böttger (Institute für Europäische Politik Berlin) and Michele Comelli (Istituto Affari Internazionali Roma) commented on the Eastern Dimension and Energy supply from both a political and legal point of view. The workshop discussed mainly the following issues: the European initiatives in Eastern Europe, notably the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP), and the problem of how to ensure energy supply for the EU and reduce dependence from Russia. The panel emphasized the main shortcomings of the EU initiatives in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Ukraine. The workshop focused on the recent developments and especially an agreement between Russia and Ukraine, allowing the former to be stationed in the naval base in Sevastopol until 2042, prolonging by twenty-five years its right that would have otherwise expired in 2017. In exchange for this, Ukraine will have the price of gas imported from Russia reduced by one-third. During this session, it was pointed out that the European Commission refuses to comment on the proposal to merge Naftogaz, Ukraine's gas company with Russia's energy giant Gazprom. The panel believes that the EU should have taken a position on this matter.



Friday Plenary Sessions

From the Greek Crisis to the Euro Crisis: towards a new governance of the Euro area

On Friday the conference continued with three plenary sessions. The first session dealt with new governance of the Euro area and was chaired by *Eric de Keuleneer* (ULB). *André Sapir* (IEE-ULB, CEPR, Brueghel), *Etienne de Callatay* (Bank De Groof) and *Paul de Grauwe* (KUL) shared their views on the euro governance, *Andras Inotai* (IWE-HAS) was the discussant. The speakers pointed out that structural deficiencies are definitely lacking to tackle the crisis, for this particular reason, mechanisms must be set up. The Eurozone being diverse, structural mechanisms are essential to deal with differences and the crisis raised lack of these mechanisms. Together with rules, the lack of coordination also contributed to the current crisis. The Eurogroup proved to be too weak to set up effective crisis prevention, after which the European Council had to invent a mode of crisis management. It was questioned whether the Stability and Growth Pact didn't serve to prevent the crisis because of the lack of understanding of the Pact by government leaders, or whether a monetary union can never go without a political union. Effective mechanisms to prevent these crises to reoccur have implications for the sovereignty of member states. Speakers highlighted the importance of consultation and structural reforms, together with the increase of European solidarity.

How the Euro crisis will influence the EU2020

The second session on Friday was related to the EU crisis as well, but focused on its impact on the EU 2020 Strategy. The session was chaired by *Mario Telò* (IEE-ULB) and speakers were *Maria Joao Rodrigues* (IEE-ULB, ISCTE-IUL), *Iain Begg* (TEPSA Board, LSE) and *Janine Goetschyn* (IEE-ULB, CNRS). *Visnja Samardzija* (TEPSA Board, IMO) was the discussant of this session. It was stated that the Lisbon Strategy was useful but there is a need to improve the instruments for the implementation as there is a lack of political and economic governance. The EU 2020 presents new challenges now, notably on climate change and financial regulations. The creation of different economic policies is needed to combine recovery and consolidation. We need to redirect public spending, reward the member states who manage this and to address the causes which are lack of competitiveness and coordination. Competitiveness needs to be increased on the national level which should be supported by EU level convergence. The new 2020 Strategy needs to generate a comprehensive labour supply, a necessary low-carbon economy and it needs to be linked to the EU budget. According to some the current crisis revealed the divide between financial markets versus EU and national political leaders. Accordingly, the finance ministers will have a bigger say in the 2020 Strategy. The current crisis could also be a opportunity on the long-run to reshape the future of the Union towards greater convergence and political integration. However stronger national commitment and stronger EU action and coordination for growth are deemed essential.

The Institutional Dimension of the External Representation of the European Union

Chaired by *Jean-Victor Louis* (Honorary Secretary General of TEPSA, IEE-ULB), this session reflected on the institutional innovations of the Lisbon Treaty on the External Representation of The EU which are currently unfolding. *Dirk Wouters* (Head of the Cabinet of the Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister) shed light on the position of the incoming Belgian Presidency. The ambition of the Belgian Presidency is for the President of the European Council and the High Representative to succeed, this requires both modesty and ambition from the member state holding the rotating presidency. The main question at this moment is do we follow the principles of the



Treaty, or do we adapt our approach to the current absence of instruments and readiness? Another important issue in this regard is the comprehensiveness of the external representation as the Lisbon Treaty does not cover all questions of external representation.

On the external role of the President of the European Council, *Jean Paul Jacqué* (TEPSA Secretary General), put forward that that not article 15, but article 22 that is most relevant for defining his role. According to this article the European Council and its President is thus not limited to CFSP but is also the main organ deciding on all aspects of external action. However, for the time being foreign policy has not yet been at the core of the European Council's agenda.

Regarding the position of the High Representative, *Jaap de Zwaan* (TEPSA Board, Clingendael), stressed that she shall conduct CFSP, not develop but initiate, to assure overall consistency in the EU's external representation. The task of assuring overall consistency in the external representation of the EU is of paramount importance. Over the past decades the specialised councils have made more foreign policy than the council dealing with CFSP. The main instrument of the High Representative is the External Action Service. The EEAS may have great impact on the diplomatic services of the member states. With the strengthening of the EU's representation abroad, these third countries may increasingly perceive the EU as the most important representation from the European continent this could also affect third country representation in member states. Overall, the innovations of the Lisbon Treaty on external action might be limited, creating the personality of the High Representative paved the way for more competent and more coordinated external action.

Turning to the position of the rotating Presidency in EU's external representation, *Hanna Ojanen* (TEPSA Board, SIIA), noted that the external salience of the country holding the rotating presidency was the reason why the presidency was viewed so positively in the member states. The change comes at a difficult time. The member states have to settle with less influence and visibility while paying more to the EU. However, the need for active and responsible member states will remain, also under the Lisbon Treaty. It might be better to have the member states to be coordinated, instead of having the member states coordinating.

Discussants *Jacek Saryusz-Wolski* (TEPSA Board, MEP) and *Andrew Duff* (Honorary member of the TEPSA Board, MEP) stressed the importance of the involvement of the EP in the CFSP as this ensures the CFSP is not a technocratic policy and can increase its legitimacy. The EP wants a more ambitious and community based foreign policy process with a sense of ownership from all member states and to involve citizens. The CFSP should become politically run and politically accountable under the Lisbon Treaty.

The conference was closed by a speech of *Wolfgang Wessels* (Chairperson of the TEPSA Board, University of Cologne), who reflected on the significance of the current debates in the long run by taking the Pre-Presidency Conference of 2023 as a starting point.

