

# Birds of a feather?

## The new Conservative group in the European Parliament

By Dr Tim Bale  
 SEI Senior Lecturer

The British Conservative Party's decision to leave the European Peoples' Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED) group in the European Parliament (EP) and establish a new formation – the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) – has attracted a lot of criticism.

Leading the charge have been the Labour government and left-liberal newspapers. Their focus has been on the supposedly extremist politics and character of the partners with which the Conservatives have chosen to work in the new group – the fourth largest in parliament. Essentially, as the *Guardian's* correspondent put it a month before the European elections, the argument is that 'the Tories are shooting themselves in the foot by trading power and influence in the committees dominated by the centre-right for a motley crew of Brussels-bashing populists and reactionaries on the rightwing fringes of Europe'.

There has been some 'friendly fire' as well. Former Conservative ministers - so-called 'Tory grandees' - have echoed the criticisms of Foreign Office veterans like Lord Kerr of Kinlochard, Britain's ambassador to the EU at the time of the Maastricht Treaty negotiations, who labeled the decision 'a rigid commitment to impotence'. A few former Conservative MEPs have gone even further: according to Caroline Jackson, the divorce with the EPP was a 'stupid, stupid policy' which would 'sow the seeds of endless trouble', isolate Cameron, and 'leave bad blood with Christian Democrat parties throughout Europe'. This view would seem to be confirmed by the more or less veiled criticism emanating from, say, Germany's Angela Merkel. Her concerns would seem to be shared even by the European leader to whom he is said to be closest, namely Fredrik Reinfeldt – the 'modernizing' Conservative leader of Sweden's centre-right coalition.

What all this criticism has in common is the assumption that the refusal of other centre-right parties in Europe to countenance leaving

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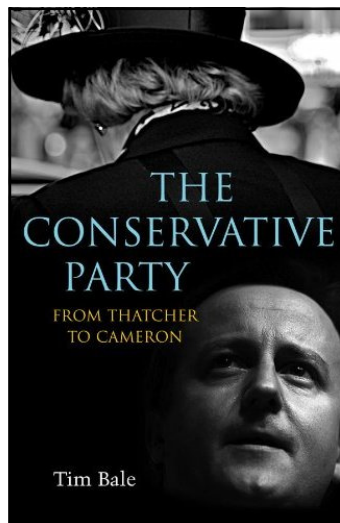
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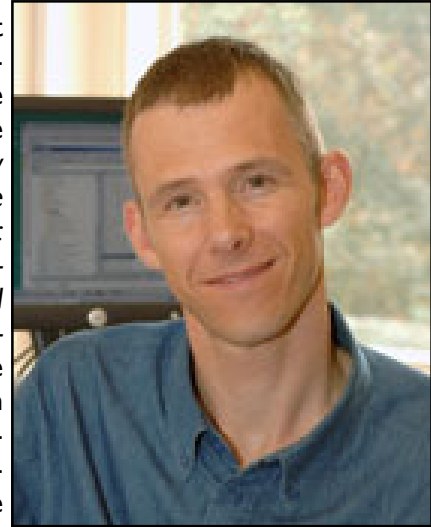
the EPP has forced the Conservatives into an alliance with partners with whom they have – or at least should have – little in common. It was this assumption that piqued not only my interest but also that of the Co-Director of the SEI, Aleks Szczerbiak, and one of our academic fellows, Seán Hanley of UCL's School of Slavonic and East European Studies. We decided to unpack and (who knows?) challenge, or at least qualify, this common wisdom by looking in more detail at the other members of the ECR and how they compared to the Conservatives.

**“while those parties which have joined the Tories in the new group are for the most part socially conservative, they are less extreme and more pragmatic than their media caricatures suggest.”**

This we felt pretty well qualified to do, given our research interests in party politics (especially on the centre-right) in both Western and Eastern and Central Europe, and our particular expertise on the three countries that provide by far the biggest components of the new group, namely the UK, Poland and the Czech Republic. I also have an ongoing research project (with the SEI's Paul Taggart) on MEPs and am the author of a forthcoming Polity Press book on *The Conservative Party from Thatcher to Cameron*, while Aleks (along with Paul) has recently edited a two volume Oxford University Press study called *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism*.



Seán is not only the author of the Routledge book *The New Right in the New Europe: Czech Transformation and Right-wing Politics*, but, like Aleks, has an extensive network of expertise we could tap into



to facilitate our research on the one-member parties in the ECR which hail from post-communist countries like Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary. Likewise, I was able to check some of my ideas about the one-member parties from Western Europe (namely, the Netherlands and Belgium) with academics who have spoken at the SEI and/or contribute to the EPERN briefings.

We hope to publish our findings soon but essentially we find that, while those parties which have joined the Tories in the new group are for the most part socially conservative, they are less extreme and more pragmatic than their media caricatures suggest. We also note that such caricatures ignore some interesting incompatibilities within the new group as a whole and between some of its Central and East European members and the Conservatives, not least with regard to their foreign policy preoccupations and their by no means wholly hostile attitude to the European integration project. David Cameron is the leader of a parliamentary party that is only going to get more Eurosceptic after the next election, but is also the most likely next prime minister of a country that needs to remain on reasonable terms with larger neighbours like Germany and Russia. As a result, he may well find that the ECR provides him with more problems than solutions.

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See the Features section for more on the 2009 European Parliament elections

### Who we are...

**euroscope** is the newsletter of the Sussex European Institute (SEI). It reports to members and beyond about activities and research going on at the SEI and presents feature articles and reports by SEI staff, researchers, students and associates. The deadline for submissions for the Spring term issue is: 1st December 2009.

**Co-Editors:** Amy Busby & Dan Keith  
([euroscope@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:euroscope@sussex.ac.uk))

**Editorial Assistant:** Patrick Scott



**The SEI** was founded in 1992 and is a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence and a Marie Curie Research Training Site. It is the leading research and postgraduate training centre on contemporary European issues. SEI has a distinctive philosophy built on interdisciplinarity and a broad and inclusive approach to Europe. Its research is policy-relevant and at the academic cutting edge, and focuses on integrating the European and domestic levels of analysis. As well as delivering internationally renowned Masters, doctoral programmes and providing tailored programmes for practitioners, it acts as the hub of a large range of networks of academics, researchers and practitioners who teach, supervise and collaborate with us on research projects.

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### Where to find euroscope!

*euroscope* is easily accessible in the following places:

- the SEI website: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/1-4-10-4.html>
- via the official mailing list, contact: [euroscope@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:euroscope@sussex.ac.uk)
- hard copies are available from PoICES office
- via its new and dedicated facebook group called 'euroscope', where you can also join in discussions on the articles

**Also feel free to contact us to comment on articles and research and we may publish your letters and thoughts.**

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### Features Section: The European Parliament & 2009 Elections

The Features section of this edition of *euroscope* has a special theme and presents articles discussing the European Parliament and its recent 2009 elections, (see pages 11-15). The articles review the results and focus on Eastern Europe, the new ECR group, turnout, voting patterns and views of EU citizens about the EP and the election process.

# Message from the Co-Director...

**By Prof Aleks Szczerbiak**

**As a new academic year begins, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to all those about to commence postgraduate research and study at the SEI and say 'welcome back' to more long-standing members of the 'SEI family' both at Sussex and beyond. Those of you beginning postgraduate study or research at the SEI this year can see from reports from last year's Masters, and current doctoral, students that you are joining one of the most vibrant and exciting contemporary European studies postgraduate research and training centres.**

## **EP elections**

Last June's elections to the European Parliament (EP) were among the most important political developments in Europe during the summer months. These elections provided an important research focus for many SEI-linked scholars and practitioners. They brought together a number of the SEI's core research interests such as: European political integration, comparative European politics, parties and elections, the impact of Europe on national politics, as well as, of course, the working of the EP itself. That is why we decided to make this issue of *Euroscope* a special one devoted to the 2009 poll.

Together with our lead story on the new Conservative EP grouping by my SEI colleague Dr Tim Bale, whose eagerly anticipated book in the *British Conservatives* is due out in at the start of 2010, in this issue you will also find feature articles about the elections themselves. These include two pieces by Prof Paul Taggart and myself based on an SEI round table that we organised on the results and implications of the EP elections back in June (see pages 11-13). Other articles on the more general theme of the EP in this issue include: a report of a July SEI/UACES workshop on qualitative approaches to researching the EP by

two of our doctoral students, Amy Busby (who, in her spare time, is also *Euroscope*'s dynamic new editor!) and Ariadna Ripoll Servent (see report on page 29-30); and in the 'SEI Dispatches' section, reflections on the EP campaign by Michael Shackleton who works in the EP and is one of SEI's network of practitioner fellows. One of the highlights of SEI's autumn term weekly research-in-progress seminars (full details of which you can find on page 10) will be a paper from Prof Simon Hix (LSE) on whether the elections mean a newly dominant centre-right in the new EP on November 24. You can also find details of a series of country briefings on the elections produced by the SEI-based European Parties Elections and Referendums Network (EPERN), which I co-convene with Paul Taggart.

## **Ireland votes on Lisbon (again)**

The growth of the EPERN network reflects the SEI's success in putting itself at the forefront of an emerging academic sub-field that attempts to integrate the study of European integration with domestic political processes and develop an understanding of how these two interact. There is a now a growing body of scholarship devoted to researching this dynamic, which, as last year's Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty reminded us in the starkest possible terms, is absolutely critical to understand in order to make sense of political developments in contemporary Europe. In recent years, this has emerged as an important strand in the SEI's intellectual mission and we believe that our expertise in this field gives us a crucial edge over other European studies centres.

By the time you read this (although not at the time of writing!), the result of the second Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty (due on October 2) will be known. SEI is organising a special round table analysing the results and implications on October 20, introduced by my SEI colleague Prof Jorg Monar and doctoral researcher John Fitzgibbon. As you can see on page 26, John recently published an SEI/EPERN working paper ana-



lysing the 2008 referendum result; he will also be co-authoring (with Michael Holmes from Liverpool Hope University) an EPERN briefing on the second referendum.

### Chevening fellowship success

A few words of congratulations to my SEI colleagues who have had some major successes winning tenders and securing research funding over the summer. First and foremost, congratulations to my fellow SEI Co-Director Prof Jim Rollo (who is on research leave this term) for leading the team that was successful in beating off strong competition to run the prestigious Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) funded Chevening Fellowships in European Political Economy next year and, if all goes well, for a further two or three years (see report on page 28). Nearly 50 fellows have now completed the twelve-week programme, which runs from January-March and which Jim has overseen since 2006. It is designed to give a group of mid-career professionals from the post-2004 EU members and some of the EU neighbourhood countries, an opportunity to study and engage British and other European policy



makers and practitioners on the economic agenda facing the Union.

Well done too to my SEI colleague Prof Paul Webb who is also taking research leave in 2009-10 having been awarded a

Leverhulme Fellowship to look at the issue of popular disaffection with representative democracy (see page 16). Congratulations are also due to the SEI's Mark Bennister who defended his doctoral thesis and graduated this summer and current SEI doctoral student Emanuele Massetti (who is in the final stages of writing up his thesis as I write) for securing a prestigious ESRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship to continue his work on West European regionalist parties at the University of Edinburgh.

### Welcomes and farewells

Finally, a few words of welcome and farewell. Welcome to two new colleagues: Dr Sergio Cagnani who joined the SEI in July as a Lecturer in Strategic and Security Studies; and to Ekaterina Raskova who is working with Dr Sabina Advagic as a Research Fellow on a two-year ERSC-funded project studying the conditions of labour market policy reforms in new EU member states. You can find their profiles on pages 21.

Farewell to Prof Robin Kolodny (Temple University, Philadelphia) who made a huge impact as a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar visiting SEI and the Sussex Politics Department during the last academic year – and whom we are hoping to shortly appoint as an SEI Visiting Fellow - and to three visiting researchers that we hosted during the spring and summer: Emelie Lilifeldt (Soderton University/Stockholm University), Valeria Tarditi (Università della Calabria- UNICAL) and Nicole Wichmann (University of Lucerne). You can read their reflections on their time at SEI, and a report by Nicole on an SEI workshop on EU-Swiss relations that she helped to organise in May, on pages 23-24.

And last, but not least, a (temporary) farewell to my SEI colleague Dr Lucia Quaglia who will be moving to the Robert Schumann Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute in Florence where she will be working for the next year on her research project on financial services governance.

*Prof Aleks Szczerbiak*  
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# The SEI Diary...



The SEI Diary provides snippets on the many exciting and memorable activities connected to teaching, research and presenting on contemporary Europe that members of the SEI have been involved in during Summer 2009.

## April: Business as usual

### April: SEI welcomed new Research Fellow

**Ekaterina Rashkova** who joined the SEI as a Research Fellow working on a 2-year ESRC-funded project studying the conditions of labour market policy reforms in the new EU member states.



### 1st April: Reading Group

Sussex Law School recently established a research and reading group for Citizenship and the Constitution. This meeting, led by **Dr Yuri Borgmann-Prebil**, discussed a recent article by R. Bellamy, (*Evaluating Union Citizenship: Belonging, Rights and Participation within the EU*).

### 16-17th April: Model EU

**Jim Rollo** was the keynote speaker at a Model EU conference at the University of Indiana where he addressed around 28 university delegations on *the State of the Union*.

### 17th April: Fellowship

The SEI's **Emanuele Massetti** was awarded an ESRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh, to be awarded 4 weeks after the completion of his doctorate.



### 23rd-24th April: EUSA Conference

**Jim Rollo** spoke at the EU Studies Association conference in Los Angeles at a JCMS sponsored lecture and reception. **Lucia Quaglia** presented two papers: 'Financial services regulation in the EU: the Politics of Competing Advocacy Coal-

tion' and 'The Role of Expertise in EU Negotiations'.

### 24th April: Bursary awarded

The Francois Duchene European Research Travel Bursary was awarded to the SEI's **Ariadna Ripoll Servent** who will use it to assist with fieldwork costs. It gives £1000 for research expenses to those researching issues of European integration.



### 25th April: Poland & the EU

**Aleks Szczerbiak** took part in a panel discussion on '*Benefits, challenges or obligations? An assessment of Poland's presence in the European Union from different points of view*' at the 2nd Congress of Polish Student Societies in the UK, School of Slavonic and East European Studies/University of London.

### 27th April: Debate

The **Politics Society** held a debate entitled 'Looking for peace in the Israel/Palestine conflict: a view from both sides' where three speakers discussed the history and causes of the conflict and routes to peace.

### April: Briefing Papers

**Jim Rollo** and **Peter Holmes** have published a Chatham House Briefing Paper on Trade and the Crisis and Jim Rollo contributed a piece based on it to a larger publication by Chatham House on the crisis. These can be downloaded:

<http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/729/>

## May: Electioneering

### **6th May: Financial Crisis**

**Jim Rollo** spoke at a seminar at Strathclyde University on the financial crisis at the European Policies Research Centre.

### **7th May: The EU & Students**

**Caroline Lucas MEP** (Green) and **Clive Heemskerk** ('No2EU yes to democracy' Steering Committee) spoke at a Sussex debate entitled "Is the EU relevant to students?". The panelists clarified what differentiated them as potential recipients of our vote in the 2009 elections, which was whether they would sit in the EP or not if elected and the extent of their euroscepticism.

### **9th May: Hustings**

Some **SEI students** attended a public meeting and debate with EP election candidates for the South East region, organised by the European Movement, hosted at the Dorothy Stringer school. Present were Richard Robinson MEP (Con), Peter Skinner MEP (Lab), Caroline Lucas MEP (Greens), Catherine Bearder MEP (Lib Dems), Harry Aldridge (UKIP) and at the last minute also Dave Hill (No2EU coalition) (candidates are pictured at the top right).



### **11th May: Pub Quiz**

The Sussex student **Politics Society** held their regular termly pub quiz, fun for all as usual!

### **11th-13th May: EU Budget Workshop**

**Jim Rollo** spoke at a workshop in Brussels concerning the EU Budget Review.

### **12th May: RiP on gender**

Visiting Researcher **Emelie Lilliefeldt** (Sodertorn University/Stockholm University) presented her research on "Configuring Gender and Party: Necessary and sufficient conditions for gender balanced representation".

### **27th May: Financial Crisis**

**Jim Rollo** contributed to a Civil Society Dialogue Seminar at the DG for Trade in Brussels, speaking on the financial crisis and trade.

## June: Graduation

### **5th June: EU-Switzerland Relations**

The SEI held this workshop, organised by Visiting Researcher **Nicole Wichmann**, where **HE Alexis P. Lautenberg**, Ambassador of Switzerland to the UK, **Prof Clive Church** and SEI Visiting Fellow **Nicole Wichmann** spoke (for a report see pages 31-2).



### **8th June: Conference**

The SEI's **Aleks Szczerbiak** gave a paper at a session on 'Political Perspectives' at a conference

on 'Legacies and Prospects: Poland 1989, 20 Years On', organised by St Antony's College, Oxford, the Oxford University Polish Society and the Centre for East European-Language Based Area Studies (CEELBAS), and sponsored by the Polish Embassy in the UK, at St Antony's College, Oxford (pictured below).





## Activities

### 8-12th June: Brussels Trip

Each year the SEI organises a study trip to Brussels for its MA students. The participants meet with high level officials from EU institutions, NATO, think-tanks, the European Parliament, European Centre for International Political Economy and European Policy Centre (see page39).



### 12-13th June: JMWEN Conference

The Jean Monnet Wider Europe Network, the Europe-wide academic network which researches the politics, economics and societies of central and Eastern Europe and their relations with the EU, held conferences in Slovakia, Finland and Sweden. This conference, with the Slovak Foreign Policy Centre and the Comenius University, was held in Bratislava and **Profs Alan Mayhew and Jim Rollo** spoke. Papers have been posted at: [www.wider-europe.org](http://www.wider-europe.org). For further information please contact Alan Mayhew at: [a.mayhew@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:a.mayhew@sussex.ac.uk).

### 16th June: Elections Roundtable

A Roundtable on 'The 2009 European Parliament elections: results and implications' was chaired by **Profs Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart** (see pages 11-13).

### 18th June: Jon Snow speaks at Sussex

The **Politics Society** invited Channel 4 journalist **Jon Snow** to speak to students.

### 26th June: SEI-CEELBAS Roundtable

The SEI's **Alan Mayhew, Nat Copsey and Aleks Szczerbiak** took part in an SEI/Centre for East European-Language Based Area Studies (CEELBAS) roundtable on 'Where is Poland Heading After the European Parliament Elections? Perspectives on Politics, Economics and Foreign Policy' at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies/University College London.

### 30th June: Seminar

**Jim Rollo and Peter Holmes** spoke at a Centre for Business seminar on "Border Taxes and Climate Change".

### Summer Graduation

After passing his viva in April for his thesis entitled "The Predominance of Prime Ministers: A Comparative Study of Britain and Australia", **Dr Mark Bennister** graduated at this summer's graduation ceremony, pictured below with the SEI's Dr Dan Hough.



### June: Conference

In June **Lucia Quaglia** and **Dermot Hodson** (Birkbeck college) ran a workshop sponsored by the *Journal of Common Market Studies* in preparation for the special issue on the European response to the global financial crisis. She presented a paper on 'The British plan as a pace setter: The Europeanisation of Banking Rescue plans?'

## July: Conferences

### July: Research

**Jim Rollo** was involved in a research project for the Department for International Development on the cost of the EU's economic partnership

agreements with African and Caribbean countries.

### 1st July: Stockholm

**Jim Rollo** was involved in a one-day Evaluation panel in Stockholm of COST.



## Activities

### 6th-7th July: Trade Policy

**Jim Rollo** did a two-day training session on Trade Policy for the Departments of Business and International Development.

### 8th July: Extra RiP Seminar

**Dr Hilde Coffe** from Utrecht University presented her fascinating research on "Similarity in Husbands' and Wives' Party Family Choice in the Netherlands".

### 10th July: Book review

SEI DPhil candidate **Pete Simmons** submitted a book review to appear in *Slavonic and East European Review* 87 (4) on *Orenstein, Mitchell A; Bloom, Stephen; Lindstrom, Nicole (eds) (2008) Transnational Actors in Central and East European Transitions (University of Pittsburgh Press)*.

### 17th July: "Qualitative Approaches to investigating the European Parliament"

This SEI workshop was attended by 25 scholars from the field interested in using qualitative

methods at the EP. It was organised by **Ariadna Ripoll Servent and Amy Busby** (see page 29).



### 24-25th July:

**Dr James Hampshire** spoke at a conference on 'The EU: 20 Years After Unification' at University of Toronto on a paper entitled: 'Building Walls and Opening Doors: Rethinking 'Fortress Europe' in Light of the EU Border Package'.

### July: Chevening Success

The SEI successfully re-tendered the FCO Chevening programme (see page 28).

## August-Sept: Travels

**August: Ariadna Ripoll Servent** published "Setting Priorities: Functional and Substantive Dimensions of Irregular Immigration and Data Protection Under Co-decision" in the *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 5 (2).

### September: Leverhulme Award

**Prof Paul Webb** has been awarded a Leverhulme Fellowship 2009-10 to research the issue of popular disaffection with representative democracy. It will enable him to work with a professional opinion research company in recruiting and running 6 focus groups of UK citizens that explore peoples' attitudes towards politicians and political participation (page 16-17).

### 3rd-5th September: UACES conference

**Dr Sue Collard** organised a panel at the annual UACES conference in Angers on 'Intra EU migration as instigator of policy change: the case of British migration to France' and gave a paper on

'Language teaching policy for EU migrants'. **Dr Lucia Quaglia** presented a paper entitled 'The 'Old' and 'New' Political Economy of Hedge Funds Regulation in the EU' (page 38).

### 14-15th September: CARIS Conference

CARIS hosted a joint conference with the World Bank on the European and Asian approaches to Deep Integration, with special reference to China. Contributors were from the World Bank, DG Trade, Chinese Government advisors and Sussex alumnus Prof Haedu Hwang. **Peter Holmes and Jim Rollo** presented work done in conjunction with other colleagues from SEI and economics (see page 36).

### October: Visiting Researcher

**Lucia Quaglia** will be moving to the Robert Schumann Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, where she will be working on her research project on Financial Services Governance: International, European and National Dimensions. She will also be working at the Historical Archive of the EU.

## Activities

### **Forthcoming Events:**

#### **6th October: Welcome Party**

The SEI will hold a welcome party for the new MACES and MAEP students and new DPhil researchers in the Dhaba Café at 4pm.

#### **14th October: Gender Symposium**

LPS (Law, Politics & Sociology) will be holding this symposium in RB-12, 2-5pm with the following speakers: Women & Human Rights: Risk and Compromise—Charlotte Skeet (Law), Conceptualisations of Responsibility: family life, law and policy—Jo Bridgeman (Law), Gender and Suicide across the Life Course – Ben Fincham (Sociology), The Politics of Recognition: late abortion and the idea of a disabled identity –Alison Phipps (Sociology).

#### **23rd October: Annual Lecture, 4pm Chichester Lecture Theatre**

Judge Françoise Tulkens, President of the 2nd Section of the European Court of Human Rights, will deliver Sussex Law School's Centre for Responsibilities, Rights and the Law's annual lecture, co-hosted with the Justice and Violence Research Centre, entitled 'The ECHR is Fifty: The journey so far, the challenges ahead' (To register contact: [L.Pizzey@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:L.Pizzey@sussex.ac.uk)).

#### **22nd-24th January 2010: USMUN**

The **Sussex Model UN Society** will be holding their 4th annual debating and diplomacy weekend conference which will include a simulation of the EU Council of Ministers. See [www.usmun.eu](http://www.usmun.eu).

#### **Gateway Days:**

New Research Student Convenors, Aleks Szczerbiak and Sabina Avdagic will be organising SEI Gateway days with relevant training—please contact them with any ideas you have.

#### **Politics Society Facebook Group:**

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=home#/group.php?gid=2221375650&ref=ts>

### **SEI Research in Progress Seminars**

**AUTUMN TERM 2009**

**Tuesdays 16.00 - 17.50**

**Arts A71**

#### **13.10.09**

*The October 2009 Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty: results and implications*

Prof Jörg Monar and John Fitzgibbon (University of Sussex)

#### **20.10.09**

*Resourcing for Complex Emergencies: The Dilemmas of the Multinational Counterinsurgency Mission in Afghanistan*

Dr Sergio Catignani (University of Sussex)

#### **27.10.09**

*A strategic vision for the European Research Area towards 2030*

Prof John Wood (Imperial College)

#### **03.11.09**

*How far are the Balkans from normalisation?*

Dr Marko Attila-Hoare (Kingston University)

#### **10.11.09**

*Political tourism: Why do parliamentary deputies switch parties? Comparative reflections on the Polish case*

Dr Ian McMenamin (Dublin City University)

#### **17.11.09**

*Political learning and the number of parties: why age matters*

Ekaterina Rashkova (University of Sussex)

#### **24.11.09**

*The 2009 European Elections and the New European Parliament: A Newly Dominant Centre-right?*

Prof Simon Hix (London School of Economics)

#### **1.12.09**

*The Nature of the European Debate in Bulgaria*

Lyubka Savkova (University of Sussex)

**Everyone is welcome to attend!**

To be included in our mailing list for seminars, please contact Amanda Sims, email: [polces.office@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:polces.office@sussex.ac.uk)

# Features

## The European Parliament & Elections

This special edition of *euroscope* focuses on the European Parliament and 2009 European elections, with analyses and views from SEI staff, students and practitioners.

## The European elections: not consistently about Europe

**By Prof. Paul Taggart**  
***SEI Professor of Politics***

The recent SEI Roundtable discussing the 2009 European election results stressed that they should be treated effectively as 27 different elections. This means that there was no single EP election at the European level. From the starting point of the elections as 'second-order', it is also clear that 'Europe' was not a significant issue across the elections. The second-order idea means in practice that we see low levels of turnout, electors punishing incumbent governments, smaller and more extreme parties performing well and the predominance of domestic issues in election campaigns.

Making use of data provided by contributors to the SEI-based European Parties Elections and Referendum Network (EPERN) Briefings on the EP elections (see <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/1-4-2-2.html>), we then examined the nature of the elections across the EU in the light of these factors.

In 24 of the 27 member states, the incumbent parties of government suffered a loss of electoral support with the highest levels of punishment being meted out in Hungary (-30.8), Latvia (-30.8),

Bulgaria (-29.6) and the UK (-25.4). Only in Italy, Poland and Finland did the incumbent parties not suffer losses.

Comparing left and right, it was clear that the EP elections were particularly poor. Incumbent governing parties of the left/centre-left suffered an average loss of 14.8% while those on the right/centre-right suffered a drop of 10.0%. Grand coalition governments suffered a loss of 9.3%. And, if we treat the elections collectively the centre left garnered 21.9% while the centre right drew 30.6%.

EPERN country experts were asked to assess the relative role that the European issue played in their respective national EP elections. In no countries did the European issue have high prominence. It was deemed to play a moderate role in 6 states (namely Poland, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, and Malta). But in 13 states where Europe played a low role it was judged as absent in 5 states (Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Czech Republic and the UK).

Clearly the one thing we can say about these European elections is that they were not consistently about Europe.



# European Parliament elections in the 'New Europe': convergence or divergence?

**By Prof Aleks Szczerbiak**  
**SEI Co-Director**

Was there anything significantly different about the 2009 European Parliament election results in the ten former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007? What do these elections tell us about the way that party and electoral politics have converged or continue to differ between the 'old' EU and what Donald Rumsfeld termed the 'new Europe'? And what might be the implications of this for the work of the new EP?

## **Backlash against incumbents, mixed fortunes for the radical right**

There were certainly common features in the patterns of results between the two regions. As one would expect in what are widely recognised as 'second order' elections, in most of these countries incumbent parties saw a fall in their share of the vote. There was a very large fall in support for these parties in Bulgaria and Hungary, which had centre-left governments led by communist successor parties, and somewhat smaller falls in countries such as the Czech Republic (if one counts the Civic Democrats as 'incumbents' even though the government collapsed shortly before the election), Estonia and Lithuania, which had centre-right governments. The two exceptions in the region were the centre-right government in Poland and the left-wing nationalist government in Slovakia, where ruling parties increased their share of the vote slightly on the previous national elections.

Although media coverage in many EU member states tended to focus on the performance of the radical nationalist right, as was the case across the EU, these parties actually had a mixed perform-

ance in post-communist states. The success of the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) with nearly 15% of the votes was one of the most widely commented upon results in these elections. Having lost ground in recent national



elections, the nationalist Greater Romania Party also performed strongly (8.7%), as did the 'Attack' grouping in Bulgaria (12%). However, the radical right was virtually wiped out in Poland, a country where the clerical-nationalist League of Polish Families had finished second in 2004 winning over 15% of the vote. Most of the League's erstwhile leaders contested the election under the banner of the Polish branch of Declan Ganley's pan-European Libertas grouping, that failed to make any impact in Poland or anywhere else in the region. Right-wing nationalists also lost ground in Slovakia and Slovenia and made no impact in the Czech Republic and the Baltic states.

## **Lower turnout, less support for the Greens and far left**

However, these similarities notwithstanding, there were also a number of important differences between the results in the 'new Europe' and old EU. Three in particular are worth highlighting. Firstly, although overall turnout continued to fall across the Union, once again it was much lower in post-communist states: only 31% compared to 43% across the EU-27. This reflected the fact that these remained relatively passive, de-mobilised

societies compared to their counter-parts in the old EU states, as far as participation in elections is concerned.

Secondly, post-communist states were also characterised by an extremely low vote for parties of both the radical and the post-materialist left. While radical left parties are well established in many West European EU member states - such as Denmark, France, Greece, Portugal and Sweden to name a few - the only East European grouping from this party family that performed strongly in these elections was the Czech Communists (14.2%). Similarly, while post-materialist Green parties are a feature of virtually every party system in the old EU, the vote for these groupings was miniscule in the post-communist states. Even in those countries where they had appeared to be making a breakthrough recently, such as the Czech Republic and Estonia, Green party votes slumped.

### **Different kinds of nationalists?**

Thirdly, at the other end of the political spectrum, as these elections once again showed, the radical nationalist right in post-communist states has a somewhat different character than it does in the old EU. In particular, immigration (especially the existence of large immigrant Muslim communities), which was the rocket fuel that fired support for these parties in much of Western Europe, was simply not an issue in the post-communist states. The obvious reason for this is that these countries are net providers rather recipients of migrants. Indeed, post-communist EU states provided many of the migrant workers whose very presence made the issue of free movement of labour within the EU such a political hot potato in a number of West European states. Rather, in post-communist states nationalist parties have tended to mobilise around historical animosities between indigenous ethnic groups, particularly where the latter are ethnic minorities in countries where they once represented the former 'imperial' power (the main exception here is the Roma community) such as: Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania, Turks in Bulgaria and Russians in the Baltic states. Moreover, while Euroscepticism is very much part of the repertoire of the West European radical

nationalist right, many such parties in post-communist states – such as the Greater Romania Party, Slovak National Party and the 'Attack' party and Bulgaria – appear to be much more positive about the European integration project; although, as Karen Henderson has pointed out, many of them are 'phoney Europhiles' whose actual policies on issues such as respect for ethnic minority rights contradict with EU norms.

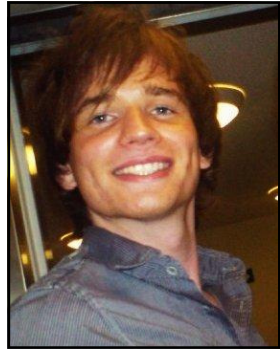
All of this helps to explain, in part at least, why it is so difficult for radical nationalist parties to co-operate with each other at a pan-European and EP level. An example of the way that the migration issue plays out differently in the old EU and new Europe, could be seen during the last attempt to form a radical right grouping in the previous EP. The so-called Identity, Tradition and Solidarity (ITS) grouping collapsed when the Greater Romania Party left after the Italian far-right politician Alessandra Mussolini launched a scathing attack on Romanian immigrants in her country. Even within the region itself, it is difficult to see (to take one example), the Slovak National Party and Jobbik co-operating with each other when a large element of their political appeals lies in mobilising resentment against (in the case of the Slovak Nationalists) or (in the case of Jobbik) in defence of the Hungarian minority within Slovakia.

### **More divergence than convergence?**

Whatever convergence there may be between the old EU and the former communist states of central and East Europe in other respects, the 2009 EP election results point to the fact that there are still some important differences between their electoral and party politics. Different levels of election turnout suggested that the states of the new Europe remain relatively de-mobilised societies, when it comes to participation in elections at least. Levels of support for the extreme and post-materialist left are very different in the two regions and the nationalist right has a very different character. The latter's support is driven more by historical animosities between indigenous ethnic groupings than by migration and they are (in some cases at least) less (openly) Eurosceptic than in Western Europe.

# SEI staff and students blessed the ballot boxes during the EP election

**By Paddy Scott**  
**Politics undergraduate**



**Statistics, comments and narratives about declining voter turnout are often bandied about by the media and politicians when an election is called.** It is, in most national contexts, a foregone conclusion that European Parliamentary elections will invariably attract fewer voters to the polling booths than national elections. Yet it seems that little is known about exactly which socio-economic groups are – and indeed are not – turning out on polling day(s) when Brussels calls.

I wanted to know if those who spend their lives living, breathing and teaching politics actually ‘bother’ voting, or whether we at the SEI (students and academics) are as apathetic, or indeed indifferent, about European elections as turnout figures lead us to believe. My survey, powered by *Survey Monkey*, suggests that, from academics to postgraduates, right through to undergraduates, there is generally a healthy attitude toward voting in EP elections. This year, 80% of the SEI’s academic faculty voted. 60% regarded this as their civic duty, whilst 20% voted because they “believe in the European project”. And what about the remaining 20% who didn’t vote? One offender claims to have “got waylaid”.

As for the SEI’s undergraduates, 64% did vote; 36% did not. Whilst this turnout rate is well above the British national average registered in 2009, the 36% should be delineated and analysed. The majority did not stay at home because they “could not be bothered to vote”. Rather, a significant number of students left qualitative feedback, detailing that they were not registered to vote in the constituency which they reside in whilst at

university. Perhaps of greater concern is that a notable number of undergraduates were not registered to vote whatsoever. Of those undergrads who did vote, it seems that the prevailing motivation to bless the ballot box was driven by a strong political affiliation, as opposed to being based on a sense of civic duty, which applied to only 45%. The remainder were driven by a specific sentiment relating to their support of, or opposition to, the EU.

The award for the highest turnout goes to the SEI’s research students. 91.7% of this group voted, despite the large number of students who do not have British citizenship, thus making voting a somewhat arduous endeavour given the registration processes involved. Furthermore, research students represent the least Eurosceptic core of the SEI (or so says the survey). Just over 60% “believe in the European project”.

So what can we extrapolate? It is fair to say that those who study and research politics, and thus understand the intricacies of political, economic and social institutions are more likely than the ‘average’ citizen to vote. This may indeed translate into higher turnout values amongst this group when a national election is called. However, to expect a concrete commitment to vote by those who possess an above average knowledge of politics, and in this case the EU, is a misplaced expectation. Perhaps greater attention needs to be paid to an alarming number of young people, often without any permanent abode, who simply do not register themselves to vote.

One thing I will certainly take from this study is how tough it can be to engender responses from my proposed respondents (primarily undergraduates). Perhaps this pertains quite innocently to the vagaries of using email as a method of distributing the survey, or perhaps it feeds into the broader issues researchers often face when conducting elite surveys.



Whatever it may be, the point to press is that the SEI did (do) vote and voters belonging to specific professional circles within the SEI are exercised by specific attitudes and beliefs when voting. The

'younger', undergraduate core are driven by partisan interests, whilst the, excuse me, 'older' core – the SEI's academic faculty – are exercised by the spirit of civic duty.

# EU citizens and the European Parliament

**By Dr Sally Marthaler**  
**SEI Researcher**



According to the European Parliament's analysis of the 2009 European elections, the primary reason why people did not vote, given by 28% of abstainers, was 'a lack of confidence in or dissatisfaction with politics generally', rather than 'a lack of confidence in or information from the European institutions' (EP Survey: July 2009). Nonetheless, findings elsewhere in the post-electoral survey suggest that knowledge of and trust in the European Parliament did indeed play an important role in these elections. 42% of respondents (both voters and non-voters) felt that they did not have all the information necessary to choose a candidate and 41% felt that the EP did not take into consideration the concerns of European citizens.

These findings with regard to knowledge of and trust in the EP are consistent with those from previous surveys. In late 2008, (Eurobarometer 303) 73% of citizens considered that they were badly informed about the EP's activities and 64% said that if they did not vote in the elections, it would be because they did not know enough about the role of the EP (EP opinion poll, March 2009). Similarly in early 2008, (EP opinion poll, Sept 2008) 60% of those contemplating not voting said that this was because they did not know

enough about the EP's role, while 57% said it was because they thought that the EP did not pay enough attention to the problems that concerned them and 53% because they did not feel well represented by MEPs.

The EU itself acknowledges that the latest results for trust in the EP are 'worrying' (Eurobarometer 308). They are the worst for ten years and show a steep decline in confidence, from a high of 57% in autumn 2004, shortly after the most recent enlargement, to a low of 45% at the beginning of 2009, although it is only in the UK that an outright majority of citizens tend not to trust the EP (59%). The main reasons given in a 2008 survey, (EP opinion poll, Sept 2008) for this lack of confidence were that the EP is too distant from ordinary citizens (41%), that the public does not have enough information about the EP (25%), that the EP has a negative effect on national economic growth (17%) and that people do not trust MEPs (16%).

The factors underlying confidence in the EP are complex, involving attitudes towards both the institution and its representatives, with socio-demographic, political and national variations. Research being carried out at SEI on citizens and Europe will shed further light on the current erosion of trust in the European Parliament, as one of the key elements in citizens' engagement with (or disengagement from) the EU.

### **SEI Working Papers on the European Parliament & Elections** <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/1-4-10-1.html>

Stefano Braghiroli (2008) 'Home Sweet Home: Assessing the Weight and the Effectiveness of National Parties' Interference on MEPs' everyday Activity' in *SEI Working Paper 108*

Paul Taggart & Tim Bale (2006) 'First Timers Yes, Virgins No : The Roles and Backgrounds of New Members of the European Parliament' in *SEI Working Paper 89*

Kenneth Chan (2004) 'Central and Eastern Europe in the 2004 European Elections: A not so European Event' in *SEI Working Paper 81*

# On-Going Research

This section presents updates on the array of research on contemporary Europe that is currently being carried out at the SEI by faculty and doctoral students.

## The Problem of Representative Politics and Democratic Disconnect

**By Prof Paul Webb**  
**SEI Professor of Politics**

**This project is the subject of a Leverhulme Fellowship which I have been awarded for 2009-10, and addresses the issue of popular disaffection with representative democracy.**

In many of the world's established democracies, the talk is of disconnect, alienation and apathy - and the search is on for both explanations and ways to put things right. The blame for this state of affairs is often heaped on parties and politicians and, somewhat less tangibly, on 'the political system'. Those who reject this common wisdom, on the other hand, level their sights on the mass media, and occasionally even on the public itself. The Parliamentary expenses scandals that shook the Westminster establishment in Britain earlier this year elicited both kinds of reaction - though predominantly the former, as frequent outbursts of splenetic public anger made clear.

This situation dovetails with a longstanding difference between the protagonists of participatory democracy and those who defend representative democracy. Whereas the former are inclined to blame the politicians and in some sense or other 'the system', the defenders of representative politics are more disposed to say that citizens themselves, and the media on which they depend for political information, are responsible for the low

esteem in which politics and its leading protagonists are currently held. From the perspective of this latter school, the radical participationists are unrealistic in their vision of a widespread popular capacity to engage with politics, and prone to stray uncomfortably close to the



territory of shallow populism in their naïve and unreasonable view of the job done by political elites. To the participationists, however, this is an apology for an anachronistic and elitist view of democracy that takes insufficient account of the cognitive revolution which has facilitated a far greater potential for popular political engagement.

A powerful contribution to this debate has been made in recent years by social psychologists John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2002) in their research on American voters. They offer a stark challenge to the participationist visionaries in reporting findings which suggest that 'the last thing people want is to be more involved in political decision-making'. They summarise the orientations of American citizens as a preference for some kind of 'stealth' arrangement, whereby citizens know that democracy - and especially accountability - exists, but expect it to be barely

visible on a routine basis. Moreover, they draw on findings from social psychology to challenge the claimed benefits of participatory democracy as 'wishful thinking', and they point out that research tends to reveal that it only works under very limited conditions. In short, citizens prefer to guard against representatives' presumed tendency to shirk, not through 'police-patrol' oversight – direct, continuous and proactive – but through 'fire-alarm' oversight – mediated, episodic and reactive.

This research sets an important challenge which needs to be taken up in Europe and elsewhere. Are the Stealth Democracy findings the unique reflection of the American political culture? Or do they reflect a more general mindset among the citizens of advanced industrial democracies? Existing work in this field that draws exclusively on survey data is deeply unsatisfactory; at best it produces limited insights, and it is sometimes downright ambiguous (see Webb 2007 for more on this particular problem). In order to better understand the nature of citizen attitudes towards greater political participation, I shall be replicating and building on the Stealth Democracy model by running qualitative focus group discussions with British citizens that will enable detailed contextualised analysis. This analysis will be both intrinsically valuable and will help frame exact hypotheses and models which can be systematically tested in subsequent stages of survey research, on which I shall be collaborating with colleagues Tim Bale and Paul Taggart, with whom I share a longstanding interest in this subject (see Bale et al. 2006). These later stages of research will incorporate survey and experimental methods.

The Leverhulme Award will enable me to work with a professional opinion research company in recruiting and running six focus groups of citizens that explore people's attitudes towards politicians, parties and political participation. In particular, I wish to examine the two hypotheses which can be derived from the existing literature, but which have never previously been systematically tested. First, that there are two quite different types of citizen who are 'disaffected' with or 'disconnected from' politics, but in distinctive ways: 'Dissatisfied democrats' (middle class, educated, activist and articulate devotees of a vision of highly engaged

citizens); and 'Stealth democrats' (low socio-economic status, less educated, inactive, with little interest in politics, who are absorbed largely by private concerns). The second hypothesis is that greater and more high-intensity forms of participation would at best only be effective in respect of the former of these groups (the dissatisfied democrats), but would be counter-productive with respect to the latter (stealth democrats). While the former may chafe at the participatory limitations of traditional forms of representative democracy such as political parties, and have the confidence that they could thrive in the context of greater institutional opportunities for participation, the 'stealth democrats' are actually more vulnerable to political marginalization, for they are less likely to thrive through or seek out direct and active engagement. They have traditionally depended on parties (among others) as key interlocutors and tribunes of their social group interests, but their parties (typically social democratic or labour in orientation) have often lost this role through strategic adaptation. Without representative parties that express their social identities and serve as 'communities of political learning', as was once the case, these citizens retreat into a disaffected and alienated take on politics. These feelings will only be exacerbated by evidence of 'feather-bedding' by self-interested politicians and parties. The implications of the research findings into these issues should be important for the reforms that the political elites who attempt to respond to the problem of democratic disconnect devise. New forms of radical participatory democracy may not be the answer that some envisage them to be; saving our existing systems of representative democracy may be of far greater import, since few citizens are likely to care for more demanding levels of political involvement.

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# The global financial crisis one year on

**By Dr Lucia Quaglia,**  
***SEI Senior Lecturer***

**Over the last year or so, the world economy has experienced a financial crisis on a scale that has not been witnessed since the Great Depression.** What began as a localised phenomenon in the US sub-prime residential mortgage market in mid-2007 became a fully-fledged global financial crisis in late-2008. The effects of this crisis on the European economy have been acute, prompting an unprecedented degree of policy intervention at the European Union (EU), euro area and national level.

In the short and medium term, measures were taken by the European Central Bank, national central banks and EU governments with a view to unfreeze credit markets, secure bank deposits and recapitalise the banking sector. The national banking rescue plans were subject to the approval of the European Commission under the rules governing competition policy in the EU, though the European Commission adopted a pragmatic approach to this matter. Central banks in the EU and worldwide engaged in a substantial cut of interest rate during the second half of 2008. A European fiscal stimulus package was agreed in December 2008 and implemented afterward. EU medium term financial assistance was provided to some central and eastern European countries, namely Hungary, Latvia and Romania, in conjunction with assistance from the International Monetary Fund.

In the medium and long term, an intense regulatory activity has been undertaken by the EU, under the impulse of certain member states, first and foremost France and Germany, inter alia passing a regulation on credit rating agencies and proposing a directive on hedge funds managers (to be precise, alternative investment funds managers). Following the de Larosière's report, the very architecture for financial regulation and supervision in the EU is undergoing a significant reform through the proposal to establish a European Systemic Risk Board and to transform the so-called

Lamfalussy committees into agencies.

Reform proposals in the EU have gone hand in hand with a debate on the overhaul of global economic and financial governance. The G20 has emerged as the international venue of choice for heads of state and government seeking a coordinated approach to bank rescue packages and macroeconomic stimulus packages. At the technical level, the Financial Stability Forum (later reformed as the Financial Stability Board by the G20) has been at the centre of various networks of regulators in elaborating the response to the financial crisis.



**“the crisis has been seen by many observers in the EU – rightly or wrongly – as a failure of the Anglo-Saxon model of financial capitalism and ‘light touch’ regulation.”**

The EU, under the advocacy of certain member states has also pushed for stricter and more extensive regulation of several financial activities in international fora, first and foremost the G20. The global financial crisis has somewhat increased the regulatory power of the EU in the international arena and vis-a-vis the US. Indeed, the crisis has been seen by many observers in the EU – rightly or wrongly – as a failure of the Anglo-Saxon model of financial capitalism and ‘light touch’ regulation. The EU seems to have drawn some lessons from the global financial crisis, however whether the ‘right’ lessons from the crisis have been learnt by the EU is hard to tell at this stage.

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# Rights, Legal Mobilization and Political Participation in Europe

**By Prof Susan Millns & Dr Charlotte Skeet**  
*Sussex Law School*

**SEI-linked Sussex Law School members, Professor Susan Millns and Dr Charlotte Skeet, will take part in a workshop on 'Rights, Legal Mobilization and Political Participation in Europe, taking place at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP, Athens, Greece) from 8-11 October 2009.** The workshop, which is funded by the European Science Foundation, explores the mobilization of rights on behalf of less privileged social actors and civil society. It does this through an examination of legal and judicial processes and collective and public interest goals in Europe.

While existing studies have adopted a top-down approach focusing on judicial and legal variables to understand the expansion of rights politics, this workshop employs a bottom-up approach that investigates the role of individuals and civil society in mobilizing the law in a largely unexplored area of study in Europe. As yet there has been little research in European comparative legal and political analysis of whether, and the extent to which, citizens actually pursue their interests and seek to influence political processes through the legal and judicial system. This reveals a significant gap given the ample evidence attesting to a growing trend of public interest litigation across Europe. This is accompanied by social mobilization by NGOs and more recently supported by a variety of equality bodies, both at the national and at the European level. European Union anti-discrimination directives also envisage a strengthened role for civil society actors and NGOs to engage in judicial and/or administrative proceedings on behalf of, or in support of, complainants. Yet, there is still little systematic knowledge and country specific documentation of this flourishing activity, as well as of its consequences for political participation and

electoral democracy in European polities.

Through a series of case studies focusing on specific areas of rights claims, the exploratory workshop aims to identify relevant conceptual and empirical tools, as well as formulating relevant hypotheses that may pave the way for further research. To this end, the workshop will explore questions such as the extent to which citizens activate legal processes and judicial institutions to claim rights that emanate from both national and European (EU and European Convention on Human Rights) sources and why they do this. Also under investigation is the kind of rights claims that litigants raise and the specific types of policies, laws and practices that have come under judicial scrutiny in different European countries; the legal, judicial, social and political factors that appear to shape variation in the degree and patterns of legal mobilization and public interest litigation across countries; the extent to which legal mobilization through courts mounts a noticeable challenge and effectively pressures government politics and decision-making; and whether legal mobilization around rights claims has grown over time and to what extent it may be viewed as a growing form of political participation in European democracies.

Three particular areas of public interest litigation have been selected for study, namely gender equality, the rights of immigrants and the rights of historical minorities and minority nations. Professor Millns and Dr Skeet will address the first of these issues through an investigation of the rise of rights litigation in pursuit of gender equality claims and the mobilization of women and sexual minorities in the United Kingdom to this end. Thus, beginning with an historical account of the development of the women's rights movement in the UK, Professor Millns and Dr Skeet's contribution will examine the success or otherwise of early campaigns around equal pay and sex discrimination in employment associated with first wave or liberal

feminism.

The paper will then investigate patterns of litigation of women's rights in the courts examining the type of participation that women engage in through the legal process, the kind of cases (e.g. sexual violence, reproductive rights, sex discrimination, family law, immigration/asylum) which have been heard in court and the extent to which women claimants are supported by wider movements, organizations or associations aiming to support women's claims for gender equality (e.g. the Fawcett Society, Rights of Women, Southwell Black Sisters, the new Equality and Human Rights Commission). The presentation will examine in particular the recent (re-)construction of equality claims in terms of human rights and the invocation of the Human Rights Act 1998 to this end to see whether the conceptualization of women's rights as human rights is a progressive or regressive way to promote and realise women's claims for equal rights and social justice. Finally, the paper will examine the extent to which women's participation in political life may have promoted a wider engagement with litigation around gender equality claims and a greater visibility and debate about

women's rights issues in the public sphere in the UK.

The overall purpose of the workshop is to measure, from a comparative perspective, the ways in which gender equality, immigrant and minority rights claims have attracted growing levels of litigation and have been supported by mobilization among civil society actors, NGOs and independent state agencies such as equality bodies and national human rights institutions. Participants will attempt to map, on the basis of empirical documentation, the extent and nature of legal mobilization across Europe and to engage in a comparative analysis of the structural, institutional, social and political factors that influence cross-national variations as well as variations across the three different issue areas. Ultimately the goal is to develop and formulate a more extensive research agenda regarding rights litigation and legal mobilization as forms of political and public participation in Europe.

For more information please contact Professor Susan Millns ([S.Millns@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:S.Millns@sussex.ac.uk)) or Dr Charlotte Skeet ([C.H.Skeet@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:C.H.Skeet@sussex.ac.uk)).

# New SEI staff profiles

## Dr. Sergio Catignani

Dr. Sergio Catignani joined the Sussex European Institute on 1 July 2009 as a Lecturer in Strategic and Security Studies.

Prior to Sussex University, Dr. Catignani has been a Lecturer in International Security (Leiden University, 2008-09), a Max Weber Fellow (European University Institute, 2007-08) and a Lecturer in War Studies (King's College London, 2005-07). At King's College London, Dr. Catignani helped establish the successful e-learning MA in War in the Modern World programme.

Dr. Sergio Catignani obtained his MA (Hons) Po-

litical Studies and MLitt (Research) International Relations at the University of Aberdeen and his DPhil War Studies at King's College London. His subject and research expertise and teaching inter-



ests comprise of Middle East Security issues (particularly Israeli security, Israeli-Palestinian rela-

tions and Gulf Security) as well as strategic and military studies (especially irregular warfare, civil-military relations and contemporary military operations).

He has also served as a counter-insurgency military advisor to the US Army's 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He is the author of *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and the Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army* (Routledge, 2008) and co-editor of *Israel and Hizbollah: An Asymmetric Conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Routledge, Nov. 2009). He has published articles in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Parameters* and *The Royal United Services Institute Journal*. His most recent publication in *The Royal United Services Institute Journal* (August 2009 issue) analyses the Israel Defence Forces' operational performance during its January 2009 Operation 'Cast Lead' in the Gaza Strip.

Over the last five years Dr. Catignani has princi-

### **Ekaterina Rashkova**

Prior to accepting a Post-doctoral position at the University of Sussex University, Ekaterina spent several years at the University of Pittsburgh, working on a doctoral dissertation investigating the determinants of the number of political parties. Before that she received a Bachelors degree of Economics, a Masters degree of Political Economy and Public Policy, and a Masters degree of Political Science from Washington University in St. Louis. Ekaterina has also studied philosophy at Sofia University and worked for the European Commission Delegation in Sofia before moving to the US.

Her field is comparative politics and she specializes in institutions, and institutional development, most notably, in electoral and party systems. Her main research interest lies in the crossroads between institutions and behavior, and she is interested in explaining the existence of (or the lack thereof) specific political outcomes with the presence or absence of particular institutions.

Her research is of cross-sectional time-series character, and she tries to explain variations in

pally researched and published on Israeli counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism strategy, operations and tactics in order to explore and answer the following questions: Under what conditions do conventional militaries adapt successfully to non-conventional forms of warfare such as insurgency, guerrilla and terror warfare? What constitutes success in a counter-insurgency campaign? How does the organisational culture of a military affect that military organisation's behaviour in relation to domestic (mainly civil-military relations) and international (mainly security threat) stimuli? Does organisational culture hinder or promote organisational change?

He is currently researching on the U.S. military's organisational adaptation to counter-insurgency and nation-building and is keen to work with researchers and students interested in the issues and research interests outlined above and looks forward to being an active member of the SEI.

political outcomes among different systems, as well as within systems, but across time. In this sense, some of her projects have the so-called



hierarchical structure, where variations at the topmost level are explained by common factors of units which are nested within another level (for example districts nested within countries).

Ekaterina's dissertation project tries to explain the variation in the number of political parties which exists between developed and developing democracies. Existing theories of the determinants of the number of parties are unable to account for this difference. She explains this gap with the fact that rationality, and the behavior



## Research

which rational choice models predict, has thus far been erroneously assumed to exist a priori, while, she argues, rational behavior is learned over time. Her research develops a mathematical rule for predicting the optimal number of political parties for a given electoral unit, extending the party systems research agenda of Gary Cox. With her proposed theory and statistics, scholars can now compare different systems, for a single or multiple periods, as well as the same system (unit) over time.

Studying institutions and their effect over the outcomes of political behavior, led her to the project which she is currently working on at Sussex Uni-

versity. In April, 2009, she joined Dr. Sabina Avdagic in an ESRC funded research project studying labour policy reforms in the new EU member states. The project is the first attempt to comparatively analyse the determinants of specific labour market reforms in Eastern Europe. They suspect that the traditionally expected relationship between party ideology and direction of reforms might be reversed in the former Communist states, due to the retained political influence of the socialist parties, while the institutional determinants, such as timing of the reform, or government type, are expected to find confirmation even in these new democratic settings.

## Visiting researchers' reports

### **Prof Robin Kolodny**

**Fulbright Distinguished Scholar, Associate Professor of Political Science at Temple University, Philadelphia, SEI Visiting Fellow 2008-2009**

During the 2008-09 Academic year, I had the honor of serving as a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar on a Lecture/Research Grant at Sussex. My expertise is in American politics, elections, campaigns and political parties so as you can imagine, much of my time in the Fall was spent giving talks about the 2008 American national elections. I gave talks both before and after the election at Sussex as well as other universities in the UK and in Greece.

I very much enjoyed watching the election returns at the American embassy in London with 2,000 Americans and its friends. In the spring and summer terms, I taught a year two course 'Politics and Governance in the USA' at Sussex. This was a fantastic experience as I learned much about the British education system and at the same time was able to educate people about American politics and culture.

While at Sussex, I began research on comparative

political campaigning, with an interest in the professionalization of campaigns through the use of political consultants. But my research led me to ask a larger question – how do campaign professionals begin to establish themselves



in democracies, especially newer democracies? I then focused my attention on democracy promotion in Europe. Which countries invest resources in shoring up the political and electoral systems in other countries? What is the result of these efforts? And of course, why do they bother to invest scarce resources this way in the first place?

Part of the question is easily answered through the lens of EU accession. Beginning in the early 1990s, long-standing Western European democracies became concerned about the consequences of sudden democratization in East and Central

Europe. Donor states such as Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden had early, intensive programs to train political party personnel, journalists, and government officials about the best parts of their own systems with an eye to encouraging practices to achieve consolidated democracies. The successful expansion of the EU in 2004 and 2007 meant that many of the post-communist European countries had achieved stable democratic practices. However, many donor states continued their work in the Balkan nations of the former Yugoslavia and several of the former Soviet republics in the EU neighborhood as well as in Africa and now the

Middle East.

As I was in residence in the United Kingdom, I decided to conduct a case study of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), the UK's body for democracy promotion. What makes the WFD unique is that it both supports programmes for broad civil society engagement and direct party-to-party work, the latter of which is overtly political. I am planning a wider project on the consequences of democracy promotion in Europe with other SEI scholars as a result of my time here.

## **Emelie Lilliefeldt**

*Stockholm University/ Södertörn University*

I enjoy taking things apart and then reassembling them again, just for the fun of learning how different components form a working unit. So far, the dismantle-and-reassemble lifestyle has worked very well with pens, computers and furniture that comes in flat packages – the latter being almost a national sport in Sweden. During the first half of 2009, when I was a visiting research student at SEI, it also proved to be an intellectually rewarding way of doing political science.

I embarked on my PhD project in 2007, when I was admitted to the Baltic and East European Graduate School in Stockholm. Apart from a share of area studies, the project draws from 3 broader research fields: party organisation, women's parliamentary presence and configurational comparative methods. I decided early on that I wanted to spend part of the four-year PhD programme abroad. How, then, should I go about finding a research community in which a majority of my research interests were represented? Some bibliographic Who's Who of comparative European party politics, combined with help and advice from my supervisors in Stockholm led to Sussex and SEI.

Little did I know that when I arrived in Sussex in early January, I would soon face the heaviest snowfall for almost 2 decades – which actually made Sussex feel pretty much like home. The

snow aside, I received a warm welcome at SEI and I was happy to find that I was among friendly colleagues with whom I shared several research interests. In addition, the Research In Progress seminar series quickly proved to be an inspiring break from my writing. I presented my own research in May, and I am grateful for the many useful comments and questions that were brought up during the seminar.



During the spring and summer terms, I have been working on a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) of how party-internal structures and conditions that are external to individual political parties combine in producing gender balanced parliamentary groups. Put differently, I have studied necessary and sufficient conditions for gender parity in parliamentary parties. The configurational side of QCA matches my interest in examining which conditions fit together, why they fit and how they produce a specific outcome, that is, investigating which combinations of factors are more likely to be causes rather than happenstance (or, as in the world of pens, computers and furniture: function rather than design.) In short, I came to the conclusion that fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis of individual parties may shed some new light on old ideas about gender and

party politics.

Since the very beginning of my stay at SEI, I have benefited greatly from advice from Dr Sabina Avdagic and Prof Paul Webb. Together, their support and areas of expertise formed a jointly sufficient condition for the progress of my PhD pro-

### **Valeria Tarditi**

*Università della Calabria- UNICAL*

I studied at the SEI as a Visiting Research Student for six months, from January to June 2009. This period was of great importance not only for my PhD research, but also for my personal life experience. In the SEI I found a creative and dynamic scientific environment, where specialized knowledge is produced and transmitted with enthusiasm to students. At the SEI the research activity is based mainly on collaboration and exchange of ideas and information. I had the opportunity to take part in the weekly seminars during which researchers and students, of Sussex University and also of other Universities and European institutions, discussed various topics and presented their research. I really appreciated the direct relations based on dialogue, reciprocal respect and valorization between professors and students.

During that period, I had the opportunity to work with Profs Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, who offered me continuous supervision and gave me, with simplicity, kindness and professionalism, the fundamental and necessary guidelines to reorganize and to develop my PhD research. I learned from them at every occasion, during the frequent and regular meetings in which we used to talk about my research, during the lessons, but also in normal conversation.

Following their teachings, I rewrote my research project and started the empirical investigation, consisting of the realization of interviews with some Scottish Parliamentarians. At the beginning, the idea of conducting interviews made me very excited, but also very anxious. In fact, I considered the interviews as the concrete and practical reali-

zation of the research and as a means to apply and to test my previous theoretical knowledge. However, from the other side, I was worried about contacting the Parliamentarians or forgetting questions during the interviews, for which answers were necessary. However, through the advice of my supervisors and of the other research students, that already have had this experience, I became able to schedule a sufficient number of interviews and to overcome many irrational fears. The realization of the interviews has been for me a very interesting experience.

At the beginning, the Parliamentarians tended to answer shortly, but after a few minutes, they started to trust me, giving me all the information that I needed. After the first interview, I acquired the capacity to orient and concentrate the discourse towards those topics I wanted.

I'm still at the beginning of my PhD research, I have a lot of work to do, but, after this period, I feel more confident about myself and my abilities. I have understood that when there is determination and when you have excellent guides, everything is possible and is easier than one can image.

Finally, the last, but also a very important element that has contributed to make my research period unforgettable has been the general energy of Brighton. There you have the opportunity to live in a colorful and young context, where the "diversity" and the creativity represent the richness.



## My JRA Summer Research on Anti-Racism Policies

**By Annika K. Olsen,**  
***Politics undergraduate student***

I spent this summer doing University funded research on anti-racism policies and institutions in three EU countries. As an undergraduate student, this was an excellent (and rare) opportunity to get a taster of what “real” academic research can be like – and it definitely made me more aware of the challenges of conducting research and the considerations to be taken into account when doing it in the future.

For the past two years, the University of Sussex has offered a number of generous Junior Research Associate (JRA) bursaries to students, from all disciplines, in the middle year of their degree. Through the JRA scheme, the University intends to give research-minded students a first-hand experience of doing research on a topic of their choice together with a supervisor with expertise in that research area. I was fortunate enough to be one of the students to be awarded a bursary this year and thus spent most of my summer doing comparative research on anti-racism policies and institutions in UK, Germany and Denmark. Most of the research time was spent in the library and in front of my laptop, examining national anti-racism legislation, the websites of national equality bodies, various country reports, and relevant secondary literature. I also had email correspondence with national experts in order to clarify some aspects of the legislation and enforcement.

My central research question was “How do anti-racism policies and institutions vary across three European countries?”. As a novice to law, it turned out to be a real challenge to make my way through all the national legislation to establish just how the cases vary. Based on the information collected, I created comparative grids which demonstrated the similarities and differences in anti-racism legislation. I found that, with regards to anti-discrimination legislation, the *current* national legislation in the countries studied are very similar. But here it is extremely important to take into account the influence of the EU Racial Equality

Directive and Employment Directive, both put in place in 2000, which required all EU member states to implement specific anti-discrimination measures into national legislation. Before these EU requirements, the countries had quite different policies against racial discrimination. For instance, the UK has had very extensive legislation against racial discrimination since the 1970s, and Denmark, although way behind the UK, was well on the way to establishing some significant anti-discrimination legislation before being required to do so by the Racial Equality Directive. Germany, on the other hand, was clearly lagging behind with only minor anti-discrimination legislation in place before the much discussed German anti-discrimination act was finally put into force in 2006 – some say merely as a result of the EU directives. So anti-discrimination legislation must be said to be an area in which EU developments have had a major converging influence on national policies. But important gaps still remain, especially with regards to the enforcement of the legislation. I also looked at each country's measures against expressive and physical racism, and these are policy areas in which the countries still differ significantly – perhaps because they are yet to be affected by EU requirements.



Members of the Sussex Politics department were very supportive and instructive during the research period. I was supervised by Dr. James Hampshire, faculty member of SEI, who is currently conducting research into racism and anti-racism in Europe (see pp.12-13 in issue 39 of *Euroscope*). I also got excellent support and academic guidance from Dan Keith, SEI DPhil student, who acted as my academic mentor during the research project. Altogether, the JRA research process was a very challenging experience, which has made me think much harder about how to plan and conduct research in the future.



# New SEI Working Papers

SEI Working Papers in Contemporary European Studies present research results, accounts of work-in-progress and background information for those concerned with European issues. There are 2 new additions to the series. They can be downloaded free from: [www.sei.ac.uk](http://www.sei.ac.uk).

**SEI Working Paper: No 110 / EPERN Working Paper 21**

**“Ireland’s No to Lisbon: Learning the Lessons from the failure of the Yes and the Success of the No Side”**

**By John Fitzgibbon**

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**Abstract**

The Irish electorate voted No to the Lisbon Treaty on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2008. In the run-up to the second referendum on ratifying the Treaty on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2009, a series of legally binding guarantees in relation to Irish competency over tax rates, abortion, workers rights, neutrality, and a guaranteed commissioner for each member state, were added to the referendum. The Irish government secured these agreements from the other member states in the belief that addressing these concerns would lead to a Yes result for the second Lisbon referendum.

This paper, while not challenging the validity of these specific issues, highlights two factors, related to the structure of the EU debate in Ireland, which show that more long term issues were at play in the outcome of the first Lisbon referendum. Firstly, the No side was dominated by civil society groups. The appearance of these groups is not simply connected to specific European issues but is related to more profound divisions within Irish civil society. Secondly, despite a broad ‘Yes to Europe Alliance’ the majority of supporters of mainstream parties ignored their parties cues and voted No. This paper argues that this happened because of fundamental issues of party competition that prevented a unified and effective Yes campaign. The analysis of these two factors of the first Irish Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign, not only adds to the comprehension of the outcome of the vote and that of the second vote, but also draws wider comparisons to the EU debate in other member states.

**SEI Working Paper: No 111**  
**“Political parties and gender balanced parliamentary presence in Western Europe”**

**By Emelie Lilliefeldt**

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**Abstract**

The topic of this paper is the combinations of conditions that induce gender balanced parliamentary delegations from individual political parties. In this study, hypotheses about necessary and sufficient conditions are assessed in a two-step fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). The analysis is based on data from 57 individual political parties in 11 West European democracies during the late 1980s, when several countries witnessed a surge in women's parliamentary presence.

The results indicate that none of the studied conditions was necessary or singularly sufficient for gender balanced parliamentary parties. The analysis also shows that egalitarian social structures combined with specific party-internal conditions in inducing gender balanced parliamentary delegations. It further demonstrates that for parties with localised candidate selection, either a long standing egalitarian social structure or the combination of leftist party policy and candidacy gender quotas was sufficient for achieving a gender balanced parliamentary delegation. This research also tells that egalitarian social structures formed a sufficient causal configuration together with electorally small parties, whereas large parties instead relied on their own leftist values and candidacy quotas.

# New EPERN Briefing Papers

The SEI-based European Parties Elections & Referendums Network (EPERN) produces an ongoing series of briefings on the impact of European integration on referendum and election campaigns. All EPERN papers are available free at: [www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/1-4-2-8.html](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/1-4-2-8.html). A series has been prepared on the 2009 European Parliament elections.



- No 45: [The European Parliament Election in Italy, 6-7 June 2009](#) (Nicolò Conti, University of Siena)
- No 44: [The European Parliament Election in Slovakia, 6 June 2009](#) (Karen Henderson, University of Leicester)
- No 43: [The European Parliament Election in Austria, 7 June 2009](#) (Franz Fallend, University of Salzburg)
- No 42: [The European Parliament Election in Denmark, 7 June 2009](#) (Ann-Christina L. Knudsen, Aarhus University)
- No 41: [The 2009 European Elections in Estonia](#) (Allan Sikk, School of Slavonic and East European Studies/UCL)
- No. 40: [The National Legislative and European Parliament Elections in Luxembourg, 7 June 2009](#) (Martine Huberty, SEI)
- No. 39: [The Portuguese European Parliament Elections June 2009](#) (Madalena Meyer Resende, Portuguese Institute for International Relations, New University of Lisbon and Edalina Sanches, Institute for Social Sciences, University of Lisbon)
- No. 38: [The European Parliament Election in Slovenia, June 7 2009](#) (Alenka Krasovec and Damjan Lajh, University of Ljubljana)
- No. 37: [The European Parliament Election in Sweden, June 2009](#) (Nicholas Aylott, Södertörn University, Stockholm and Malena Rosén Sundström, Lund University)
- No. 36: [The European Parliament Election in Poland, June 7 2009](#) (Aleks Szczerbiak, SEI, University of Sussex)
- No. 35: [The European Parliament Election in Ireland, 5 June 2009](#) (Dr Michael Holmes, Liverpool Hope University)
- No. 34: [The June 2009 European Elections in the Republic of Cyprus](#) (Giorgos Charalambous, Frederick University, Cyprus)
- No. 33: [The European and Regional Elections of 7 June 2009 in Belgium](#) (Jean-Benoit Pilet and Nathalie Brack Cevipol, Université Libre de Bruxelles)
- No. 32: [The European Parliament Election in Bulgaria, June 7 2009](#) (Lyubka Savkova, SEI, University of Sussex)
- No. 31: [European Parliament Elections in France, June 7 2009](#) (Sally Marthaler, SEI)
- No. 30: [The European Parliament Election in Romania, June 7 2009](#) (Ed Maxfield, SEI)
- No. 29: [The European Parliament Election in the Czech Republic, June 5-6 2009](#) (Vít Hlousek and Petr Kaniok, Masaryk University)
- No. 28: [The European Parliament Election in the Netherlands, June 4 2009](#) (Stijn van Kessel, University of Sussex and Ben Crum Vrije, Universiteit Amsterdam)
- No. 27: [The European Parliament Election in Malta, June 6 2009](#) (Prof Roderick Pace, University of Malta)
- No. 26: [The European Parliament in Finland, June 7 2009](#) (Tapio Raunio, University of Tampere)
- No. 25: [The European Parliament Election in Hungary, June 7 2009](#) (Agnes Batory, Central European University)

# Activities

SEI staff and doctoral students and PoICES undergraduates report back on their experiences of the exciting activities they have recently organised and attended.

## SEI wins competition to run prestigious Chevening Programme

**By Prof Aleks Szczerbiak**  
**SEI Co-Director**

SEI has been successful in the competition to run the prestigious Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)-funded Chevening Fellowships in European Political Economy next year and, if all goes well, for a further two or three years. This builds on SEI's success in running the programme since 2006. Nearly 50 fellows have completed the programme during the last four years, and next year the numbers go up from 12 to 14.

The twelve week programme, which runs during the spring term from January-March, is designed to give a group of mid-career professionals from the post-2004 EU members and some of the EU neighbourhood countries an opportunity to study and engage British and other European policy makers and practitioners on the economic agenda facing the Union. Under the programme, the Chevening fellows attend courses and events organised by the SEI and visit think tanks, Departments of State, Parliaments (Westminster, Scottish and European), the European Commission, as well as hearing from academics at SEI and elsewhere. Among the highlights is a major annual policy conference which is attended by academics, officials and programme alumni as well as current fellows.

In its feedback on SEI's re-tender bid, the FCO recognised the Institute's extensive experience of

providing training for mid- and senior career professionals, and its "excellent experience of leading training and research with high quality outcomes", particularly for programmes involving international participants. It praised the range of expertise of "the very capable team" assembled by SEI to run the programme, the "extremely well elaborated and very impressive" mechanisms for encouraging engagement with the UK, and the visits programme as "well planned and well thought through with a clear rationale".

Commenting on the news SEI Co-Director Prof Jim Rollo, who has been running the programme for the last four years and put together the successful re-tender bid, said:

"We are delighted to have beaten off extremely tough competition from other Universities to secure this programme once again. It is testament to the excellent SEI team that have been running it successfully for the last four years and, more generally, to SEI's outstanding reputation as a centre of excellence in research and postgraduate training focused on practitioners. SEI's scholarship is both at the academic cutting edge *and* accessible to a wide range of non-academic audiences including policy-makers, think tanks, NGOs, the media and business community. The arrival of this group of high flyers always represents one of the highlights of our year at SEI and we are once again looking forward to the lively exchanges that the fellows initiate".

# SEI workshop success: “Qualitative approaches to investi- gating the European Parliament”

**By Amy Busby & Ariadna Ripoll Servent**  
*SEI DPhil candidates*

The arrival of two new EP researchers at the SEI this year wanting to use qualitative methods, meant there was a critical mass of scholars and justification to hold a conference on the subject.

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July saw the arrival of 22 participants for this one-day workshop which was designed to allow young researchers to network with experienced scholars and practitioners from the EP, and for us all to discuss the opportunities qualitative methods present for EP scholarship and the issues they raise. The organisation was assisted by our fortune to receive UACES and Roberts Funding for the event.



After everyone had introduced their research interests, **Paul Taggart and Tim Bale (SEI)** kicked off proceedings by presenting their recent interview-based research on new MEPs' backgrounds. They spoke about how an array of literature had inspired their approach (Fenno, Davidson, Searing, Scully & Farrell) which treated MEPs as parliamentarians *per se* and sought to construct

an emic role typology. They stressed the need for research on socialisation which does not equate this with *going native*. Bale introduced some general issues qualitative researchers face concerning funding bodies, presenting to quantitative scholars and the risk of an 'us versus them' division of the field.



**Anne Rasmussen (Leiden) and Richard Whitaker (Leicester)** took the session on recent developments in the field. Whitaker addressed the underlying differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches and methodological issues such as replication and validity. He outlined some gaps left by quantitative research and stressed the potential for the two approaches to work together. He suggested several areas where qualitative methods are needed: understanding EP committees, how plenaries operate, effects of enlargement, organisational culture and meanings of conflict dimensions. Meanwhile Rasmussen analysed the development and spread of qualitative research, presenting us with the surprising finding that actually more EU research uses qualitative methods. She noted the trends for EU research to be increasingly general, large-n, rigorous and explanatory which relates to wider academic trends. The presentations led to debates about which institutions to compare the EP to (the US or also India?) and the role of and possi-



## Activities

bility for interdisciplinary research on the EP in the current academic climate and structures (led by **Ann-Christina Knudsen, Aarhus**).

The final session was a roundtable where three EP practitioners were invited to give their perspective on academic research and advice to young researchers which proved to be an invaluable experience for us. **Francis Jacobs (Head of the EP Office in Ireland)** said he enjoyed the opportunity to come and hear what academics were saying about them. He gave a lively talk on the make-up of the new EP and its committees, focusing on gender balance and backgrounds and made some interesting remarks on institutional insiders and outsiders. He encouraged research on committee cultures, their make-up and how this affects their operation, inter-institutional balances, relations with national parliaments and informality. **Brigid Fowler (Foreign Affairs committee specialist)** said she enjoyed the event because it was nice to overcome some prejudices shared by practitioners, who believe academics never look at 'how things really work'. She spoke about the strength of EP parties' organisation, the EP culture of *continuous change* and relations with national parliaments and the status of MEPs there, again referring to insiders and outsiders.

Finally, **Richard Ashworth MEP** (Conservative, South East) provided us with some interesting tales about his first days in the EP. He spoke about the EP gaining power and inter-institutional struggles as well as the reputation of committees.



He insisted on the tendency of each new Parliament to strive for more powers and predicted that the election of the future Commission President would not come without a fight.



Ashworth stressed his frustration at the lack of understanding of the EU and EP and how difficult it is to explain their work in the UK. He also underlined that electors more often than not receive only one side of the story, often misrepresented, (e.g. why the Auditors have not signed off the budget and the infamous lawnmower and banana stories). Ashworth suggested that a job for EP scholars might be disseminating a more balanced picture of what the EP and the EU do to the public. This led to lively discussions on the new EP Conservative group, with Ashworth arguing that the EP requires change, with frequent references to *the man on the street* and his interests. Questions were also debated on how many of the UK's laws the EU actually makes (further research was recommended), MEPs' divided loyalties and the recent elections (led by **Paddy Scott, SEI**).

Taggart and Bale chaired a final 'tradecraft tips' session where young researchers were encouraged to ask any practical research design questions they had, and the practitioners and scholars encouraged to impart their wisdom! These mostly centred on access issues and how best to approach and contact MEPs and EU officials and how to use surveys and the snowball technique.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the workshop and share their thoughts and experiences and hope you learned as much as we did. The day showed that this is a lively, complex and growing research area which has much to offer EU and political science scholarship.

# SEI workshop on European Union-Switzerland Relations

**By Nicole Wichmann**  
*SEI Visiting Researcher 2008-2009*

On Friday, 5 June 2009, the SEI hosted a workshop on “EU - Switzerland Relations” at Sussex House. Keynote speaker, **HE Alexis Lautenberg**, (Swiss Ambassador to the UK) spoke about “The bilateral approach, from an expedient tool to a method?”. **Prof. Clive Church**, (Emeritus Professor of European Studies at the University of Kent and Visiting Professor at the SEI) and **Nicole Wichmann**, (SNF-Visiting Researcher at the SEI and PhD Researcher at the University of Lucerne) presented some research findings on EU-Switzerland relations. **Prof Jörg Monar** chaired the subsequent discussion with the public.

HE Alexis Lautenberg impressed the audience with his in-depth knowledge of EU-Switzerland relations and with his succinct observations on how the increased economic interdependence has affected the nature of inter-state relations. He began his presentation by describing the difficult situation Switzerland faced in the aftermath of the rejection of the Agreement on the European Economic Area on 6 December 1992. Having been appointed as Swiss Ambassador to the European Communities at that point, he became one of the architects of EU-Switzerland bilateralism which found its first expression in 1999 with the signature of 7 bilateral agreements dealing *inter alia* with the free movement of persons, an elimination of technical trade barriers as well as land and air transport. Since the parties agreed on the “expediency” of the bilateral approach, they negotiated a second round of agreements, including Schengen/Dublin association and taxation of savings, between 2001-2004. In 2008 the negotiations on a third round of bilateral agreements began on *inter alia* free trade in agricultural goods and the liberalisation of the electricity market.



*Jörg Monar, Nicole Wichmann, Alexis Lautenberg and Jim Rollo at the workshop*

**“The future of Swiss integration policy remains uncertain, but there is little doubt that the policy is incomplete and that things can go wrong”.**

Though most stakeholders in Switzerland and in the EU share a positive assessment of the bilateral approach, its future is “uncertain” owing to changes in the EU and in Switzerland. Moreover, the static nature of the legal obligations contained in the agreements and the high degree of fragmentation of EU-Switzerland relations have led to difficulties in the every day management of the agreements. The situation has been aggravated since the outbreak of the international financial crisis, given that a number of member states have adopted protectionist measures and sidelined the European institutions. This and developments within the EU have had numerous effects on the “outsider” Switzerland, which is one of the EU’s main trade partners. The economic crisis has also contributed to an intensification of attacks on Swiss banking secrecy. From these observations

## Activities

the Ambassador drew the conclusion that the bilateral agreements are an “expedient” tool and that Switzerland remains an attractive partner for the EU, but that the good functioning of the relations depends both on the benevolent behaviour of the “big” member states and on developments within the EU.

Prof. Clive Church, an eminent expert on Swiss politics, gave a talk entitled “Domestic Politics and Swiss-EU Relations: euro-scepticism, euro-phobia and less”. In his presentation he illustrated the stance of the Swiss political parties and other influential groups with respect to European integration. He pointed out that the largest group in Switzerland is the euro-sceptics, which support the bilateral sectoral agreements while remaining opposed to Swiss EU-membership. They have a pragmatic stance advancing mainly economic arguments. The “euro-phobes”, (the Swiss People’s Party, Lega dei Ticinesi or the Action for an Independent and Neutral Switzerland) have been successful in using the instruments of direct democracy to make their views heard. These forces have turned against the bilateral agreements, because they perceive them as a tool for preparing the country’s EU membership. The “less”-group is made up of the Swiss actors in favour of EU membership. The New European Movement Switzerland and the cantonal governments are the key players in this regard. On the whole, these forces remain weak, which is why they have not succeeded in influencing public debates. The future of Swiss integration policy remains uncertain, but there is little doubt that the policy is incomplete and that things can go wrong. For these reasons European questions will remain high on the political agenda in upcoming years.

Nicole Wichmann talked about the “quasi-membership” of Switzerland in the EU. She showed that the country is experiencing a “creeping loss of sovereignty” which is a consequence of the high degree of “Europeanisation” that the country has experienced recently. Europeanisation results from the deliberate incorporation of EU legislative acts in the framework of the bilateral agreements as well as from a process of voluntary alignment with EU law. While Switzerland has adapted a lot of its domestic legislation

with the EU’s standards, the country has had very little say during the political processes in the EU leading to the adoption of the acts. Though the finding has to be qualified concerning the high degree of flexible integration the country experiences in some policy areas (Schengen Association, Research Policy), overall it enjoys limited possibilities to influence the adoption of EU legislation in the key institutions such as the European Commission, Council and Parliament.

**“Meanwhile, the relations with recalcitrant non-member states, such as Switzerland, also illustrate where the limitations of European integration lie”.**

The subsequent discussion made it clear that EU-Switzerland relations raise a number of interesting questions that deserve more attention. There is, indeed, little doubt that developments in the EU and the international environment influence the manner in which the EU interacts with closely integrated “non-member” countries. Meanwhile, the relations with recalcitrant non-member states, such as Switzerland, also illustrate where the limitations of European integration lie.

The SEI workshop showed that by looking at the status of neighbouring non-member states one can learn a lot about the integration process and about the intended and unintended effects of integration. Though many interesting questions were touched upon during the workshop, many aspects remained unexplored. It offered an opportunity to present an aspect of EU studies that remains under-researched to a broader audience. I would, once again, like to thank the SEI for making this event possible and my for my time in Brighton.

*For more information please contact:*

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*Or*

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# Summer Holidays!

Contrary to popular belief, the summer break is no holiday for the SEI academics who spend the time hard at work on their own research, when of course they are not off experiencing integration for themselves by attending summer schools, conferences and workshops around Europe.

## European Workshop for the Analysis of Political Text

**By Monika Bil and Emma Sanderson-Nash**  
*SEI DPhil candidates*

The European Network for the Analysis of Political Text (ENAPT) is a network of PhD students and researchers who share an interest in the analysis of party manifestos and other party documents. Their recent workshop at Keele University (25th June) addressed the question of a new approach using confrontational rather than salient indicators.

Since 1945 the CMP (Comparative Manifesto Project), has been the method widely used in the quantitative assessment of political text and is based on counting the frequency of words to assess issue significance. Whilst the method is simple and so widely used as to currently offer a vast data-set, it brings with it operational problems. Fundamentally CMP arose as a way to measure valence issues, or 'salience'. Kostas Gemenis and Elias Dinas, drawing on Pelikaan et al. (2003) made the case for the 'confrontational' method as a new alternative, having compared a number of European countries political texts and found an increase in issues on which parties are ideologically opposed. The confrontational method requires researchers to use political text to indicate whether a party is in support of or against a particular policy. It is used in the political mapping required for the increasingly popular political 'compasses' and is operationalized in a variety of ways with indices ranging from -1/+1 to -10/+10.

Presenters discussed the methodological problems of the confrontational approach with detailed talks on the use of this method in the analysis of French extreme right parties' documents (Zoe Vasilopoulou

and Nathalie Brack), green parties in Austria and Germany (Zoe Lefkofridi and Juan Casado Asensio), parties' positions in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland (Kostas Gemenis and Pollyanna Jones), referenda and party representation: the case of the Dutch EU Referendum (Tom Louwse) and reflections on the EU profiler project (Gemma Loomes and Elisabeth Carter).

The workshop participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of this type of analysis, particularly the problems that arise from parties with no position, or a neutral position, on a given issue and the importance of having more than one coder on each project to maximise consistency. The significance of sources was discussed, whether to use just manifestos, or to include policy documents, press releases and speeches. The group also discussed the limitations of what this method can explain, since it focuses on party promises and ideology rather than actual outcomes. It also placed an emphasis on importance of research questions and theory before embarking on an inflexible or rigid methodological framework.

This useful and insightful workshop concluded in the establishment of a new network that aims to reach a consensus about the details of the confrontational method and in doing so to undertake text analysis as country specialists.

**Monika Bil, Ekaterina Rashkova and Emma Sanderson-Nash** participated and Emma and Monika are members of ENAPT and have agreed to undertake case studies in the UK and Poland. For further information look at [www.http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ENAPT](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ENAPT)



# Cultural Politics in Prague

By **Amy Busby**  
*SEI DPhil candidate*

I spent from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> July at CPVP's (Centre for Public Policy) summer school on "Cultural Dimensions of Politics in Europe" in Prague. The summer school brought together 17 enthusiastic students from universities all over the EU as well as Canada, Russia and Montenegro. The diverse backgrounds and academic interests of the group led to rich class discussions and debates which often spilled over into the numerous cosy Czech cafes and bars surrounding the institute. The week consisted of an intense program of lectures and workshops as well as excellent cultural visits and social events.

The selection of lecturers meant a broad approach to political culture was taken. **Stephen Baskerville** gave lectures on political culture in Central Europe focusing on the history of Prague and proposed some thought-provoking ideas about rule by religious fanatics, and on Constitutionalism and its development in England and America and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. **Anna Horolets** gave a concise introduction to Anthropological approaches to politics, policy and europeanisation and ran some stimulating workshops and discussions on the EU audio-visual policy, our experiences of 9<sup>th</sup> May "Europe Day" celebrations and travelling narratives. **Jon Mitchell** introduced the group to performative politics and the role of ritual, discussing the EU and civil religion, as well as narratives of European identity and 'othering' of the Mediterranean and Communist East, and integral politics and neo-nationalism.



We were also privileged to have a Guest Lecture from **Irene Bellier** who spoke about how she began carrying out participant observation in the EU institutions and her recent research on Images of Europe. Overall, the program and discussions showed the importance and relevance of these forms of analysis of the European project and reinforced the complexity of the issues and multiplicity of opinions, even amongst our small group.

As well as a tour of the main city sights, we were also taken to the Mozartissimo opera, a night river cruise on the Vltava, the Czech Senate and given the opportunity to watch and discuss "Divided we Fall" (a Czech movie about the Nazi occupation). However, the best event was the day trip to nearby Kutna Hora where we were taken down a mine and given the chance to experience the eerie Ossuary (bone church), pictured below.

Overall, in its second year, the summer school was extremely well organised and provides a chance for those interested in the cultural aspects of politics to learn about the range of approaches out there and their importance to the EU project, from renowned scholars, as well as the chance to discuss them with likeminded researchers. Although we may have joked about it at the time, the added value of experiencing and enacting integration in its widest sense should not be underestimated.

# Summer schools in Siena and Berlin: experiencing Europe

**By Ariadna Ripoll Servent**  
**SEI DPhil candidate**

No time like summer to diversify one's activities as a DPhil student and no better way to do it than by participating in summer schools. Extra-curricular activities can prove an excellent way to learn, meet new people and get to know foreign university and research systems.

Two opportunities for me came up unexpectedly this summer. First, thanks to Roberts funding, I was able to attend the International summer seminar on EU decision-making and lobbying in Siena. The one-week event proved to be somewhat lopsided. While it was interesting to meet some Italian scholars and also Andrew Moravcsik, the summer school lacked focus on its choice of participants. The mix of post-graduate and undergraduate students from Europe, the United States and Africa was a double-edged blade: on the one hand, it offered good possibilities to introduce non-European students to the field of European studies. They often drew very interesting comparisons with the other political systems, especially the US. However, on the other hand it lowered the overall level of discussion and made it difficult for lecturers to address their audience and pitch their sessions at an appropriate level for all of us.

The second opportunity was the other side of the coin: an extremely focused inter-disciplinary summer school on borders in Berlin, organised by the Centre Marc Bloch, the French Embassy in Berlin and the Viadrina University in Frankfurt/Oder. They organised four very intense days where PhD students had the opportunity to present their ongoing research on various topics related to borders, from 17<sup>th</sup> century border construction to EU and national policies dealing with illegal immigrants via natural frontiers and subsequent ecological threats. The debates were lively and they did not only raise issues dealing with the meaning



and conception of borders but also to points of understanding and misunderstanding between different disciplines. The programme also offered some alternative activities that lightened the day and offered a welcome change. These activities helped to grasp the reality and physicality of borders both past and present. Berlin was indeed the perfect setting for transmitting the message: the wall, in spite of efforts to delete it just after 1989, is still an integral part of the city, even visible in small details like street lamps and urban planning. It was however interesting to see how borders have evolved in recent years, especially since the integration of most Eastern European countries into the Schengen area. In this sense, the audiovisual project written and produced by Atelier Limo (Simon Brunel and Nicolas Pannetier) offered a refreshing image of the old East-West border, presenting seven personal stories from both sides of the border (the project can be found at [www.border-speaking.eu](http://www.border-speaking.eu)). One note of caution though, the summer school is led by Franco-German researchers, therefore it is highly recommended to go there with a good (at least passive) knowledge of French and propensity for time-keeping!

All in all, both experiences were a good opportunity to get out of the British cocoon and learn how other researchers approach these topics related to my own research.

# Oh we do like to be beside the seaside!

**By Emma Sanderson-Nash and Amy Busby**  
*SEI DPhil candidates*

Despite being no strangers to the conference scene, attending the 2009 Liberal Democrat conference in Bournemouth was a first for both of us. Having been many times as party members and employees, attending as SEI doctoral researchers without a party role was somewhat of a strange experience. Quite apart from having to source and fund our own hotels, our time was our own, to nose about, talk to delegates and only our own bags to carry.

Emma is researching intra-party power in the Lib Dems and therefore attending enabled her to make good progress on her interview schedule as well as check the Party's over-all pre-election health. She is interviewing the Party's senior figures for her thesis, access to whom has proved relatively easy as a former member of staff in Westminster - here they're all too busy rushing about maximising the media opportunities and schmoozing. She wanted instead to get the views of the less well known behind-the-scenes people, such as Councillors, Federal Executive members, former staff, journalists and activists. Everyone was in one place and with a fistful of business cards it was a very quick way to get a lot of appointments made.

Meanwhile Amy is working on an ethnography of the European Parliament which will take an anthropological approach and use participant observation and elite interviews to explore everyday



political life there, focusing on the role of the EP political groups. Attending party conference was an important step in organising the internship with ALDE required for the project's fieldwork, and also a chance to meet MEPs and observe fringe panels they participated in such as; "Can Pro-Europeans Win Elections?" and "What can Europe achieve at Copenhagen?"

As Nick Clegg MP reminded members at a dinner reception, the seaside party conference is a peculiarly British tradition. They are a chance to escape the urban and find fresh inspiration, (in sync with the party's conference slogan "A Fresh Start for Britain"). Indeed the sea-air did inspire us to recognise some similarities in our research designs and want to produce an article concerning the realities of researching political life and carrying out elite interviews with politicians, a subject about which very little has been written in political science. Previously we sought advice from Education and Anthropology literature and hope our plan to produce this article will address this gap.

# CARIS-World Bank Conference

**By Dr Peter Holmes**  
*SEI Lecturer*

On Sept 14-15th 2009 the Centre for the Analysis of Regional Integration at Sussex (CARIS) which links the SEI and the Economics Department

hosted a joint conference with the World Bank (WB) on the European and Asian approaches to Deep Integration, with special reference to China. Contributors included Bernard Hoekman, Jean-Pierre Chauffour and Jean-Christophe Maur from the WB, Mingtai Fan a senior adviser to the Chi-

nese Government and several distinguished contributors to the new WB research programme on regionalism from Australia, India and the US, as well as Sussex alumnus Prof Haedu Hwang from the Seoul European Institute, Konkuk University. Peter Holmes and Jim Rollo presented work done in conjunction with other colleagues from SEI and economics. Officials from DG Trade and the Department of Business attended along with representatives of the private sector.

The conference was a blend of economics, law and political economy. The impact of deep integration at the firm level was analysed by Linda Yueh (Oxford) and Ana Fernandes (Sussex), and the institutional themes covered competition policy, public procurement, environment/climate change issues, and the role of dispute settlement. The US position was analysed by Claude Barfield. Theresa Carpenter, another alumna, presented a

paper co-authored with Richard Baldwin on “Three blocs”. A major theme running through the conference was why countries chose to sign so many detailed but non-binding trade agreements, sometimes with partners whose markets might seem insignificant, eg China-New Zealand. The hypothesis was advanced that these “soft law” commitments can be used on an exploratory basis to see what works and what does not, and through the emergence of custom and practice can provide a basis for consolidation into hard commitments at WTO. This point of view was not without its critics, however and testing it may form part of the next stage of the WB’s research programme. Another major theme was climate change, where, following a project for the Department of Business CARIS, aims to join SPRU (represented at the meeting by Tao Wang) in a new research bid on trade rules and carbon emissions.

# Getting to grips with crisp and fuzzy sets in Ljubljana

**By Stijn van Kessel**  
**SEI DPhil candidate**

In August, SEI DPhil candidate Monika Bil and I, headed off to the ECPR Summer School in Methods and Techniques in Ljubljana in order to familiarise ourselves with the techniques of Qualitative Comparative Analysis: Crisp Set QCA and Fuzzy Set QCA. I desperately needed to learn these methods in order to make sense of the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe, while Monika thought she might use the method to make sense of the governments’ impact on changes in administration. Grants from



the ECPR and SocCul’s Roberts Fund enabled us to take part. We were not the only ones from Sussex following this course, as also SEI’s Giuseppe Scotto and Linnet Taylor of Migration Studies found their way to Ljubljana. It seemed that we all got inspired by the two Prof Pauls (Webb and Taggart) and Dr Sabina Avdagic during the Comparative Method course in the Research Master, where QCA received quite some attention.

Once we arrived on campus we settled down in our pleasant room where we would spend the next two weeks (the only slight annoyance being caused by the lights in the bathroom randomly switching on and off regardless of a person being inside or not). During these weeks we would follow the course in the state-of-the-art social sciences faculty building, being taught by Benoît Rioux in the first week and Carsten Schneider in



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the second. Soon we would become familiar with mysterious terms like 'Boolean minimisation', 'logical remainder', 'contradictory configuration' and 'fuzzy set membership score', and before long we could run our own rudimentary QCA analysis.

Of course, there was ample time to socialise with fellow summer school students, to marvel at the pretty buildings in Slovenia's capital and to enjoy the view from the Lego-esque castle. Also the surrounding area proved to be worth a visit and

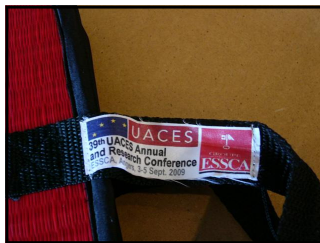
many of the students enjoyed a relaxing weekend at the picturesque Lake Bled and at one of the local summer festivals (where one could witness a whole cow being prepared on a massive spit-roaster, being operated by a man the size of Arnold Schwarzenegger). All in all, we were kept so busy that I did not even manage to follow up Sabina's culinary tips and as a result he missed out on the, apparently very tasty, 'cevapcici' and 'lepinja'. Alas, perhaps next year...

# The SEI goes to Angers...

**By Ariadna Ripoll Servent**  
***SEI DPhil candidate***

The annual UACES conference took place from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of September in Angers, situated at the heart of the Loire valley. In this exceptional location, the SEI had the opportunity to present three different research projects as three of its members were present.

**Dr Lucia Quaglia** presented a paper on the 'Old' and 'New' Political Economy of Hedge Funds Regulation in the European Union and chaired a panel. At the conference, she was also interviewed by an official of the House of Commons drafting a document on EU financial services regulation. Meanwhile **Dr Sue Collard** spoke about language policy: (French) language teaching to (anglophone) immigrants. Finally, **Ariadna Ripoll Servent** questioned in her presentation whether the European Parliament is striking a balance between liberty and security or whether it is playing the co-decision game.



The conference was also an excellent venue to meet other academics working on specialised ar-



reas of European studies and strengthen old acquaintances and friendships. Occasions such as the conference dinner, that took place at the impressive Chateau de Brissac, one of the tallest chateaux in the Loire valley, allowed participants to meet and discuss in a more relaxed ambiance.

All in all, the organisers achieved conveying a welcoming and distended environment to the conference that made young and more established academics feel comfortable and ready to engage in constructive discussions.

After the Angers experience, I am looking forward to Bruges 2010 where myself and SEI DPhil candidate Amy Busby hope to put together a panel to discuss qualitative approaches to the European Parliament and present more substantive elements of our research on the EP if possible, as a result of the EP workshop (see p29-30).

# A year in the life of MAEP

**By Naomi Whitely**  
**MAEP student 2008-09**

As the year comes to an end for us 7 MAEP (MA in European Politics) students, we have begun to ponder what it all means. As an ex-Sussex undergrad, coming back as a Masters student in 2008 was bitter sweet; the excitement at being at Sussex for another year came with a gut wrenching feeling of anticipation. The words *20,000 word dissertation* kept swimming around in my head. However as the academic year started the dreaded dissertation seemed a world away.

The first MAEP only option (*Public Policy*) was an eclectic melting pot of both young and mature students and a diverse mix of nationalities including Kosovan, Polish, British and American. We went on to join our MACES (Masters in Contemporary European Studies) counterparts in *The Making of Contemporary Europe*. Low and behold by December an exciting world of exams and term paper deadlines loomed for the beginning of the New Year. Nonetheless, all of MAEP and MACES could be found at the SEI Christmas party, the highlight of the year until that point. The traditional food of more than fifteen nations and the wine was flowing, a great way of getting acquainted with members of both courses, their nations and a great way to sign off from 2008.

The 3-hour *Public Policy* exam at the beginning of January was not exactly a highlight, but we found confidence in the grades we received from that course; I feel it necessary to point out the exam was difficult enough that 3 of the 7 of us retreated



to Falmer bar soon after (pictured above). But the excellent grades meant one academic event stands out for us all as we all shared similar concern and then delight - thank you Prof Shamit Saggar from all of MAEP. The year continued with a plethora of social activities including regular football matches and the meeting of minds between MAEP and MACES in Falmer bar; a healthy relationship was formed between the core of MAEP and MACES as we joined together every Thursday to pay homage to Dr James Hampshire's *The Politics of Citizenship and Immigration* option and continue the reverting discussions sparked in the seminars.

The annual June MAEP and MACES trip to Brussels has quickly become a trip of legend. The academic purpose of the trip was to gather information for our dissertations and although we did gain some very useful information during our visit, the consequence of the trip was to bring everyone MAEP and MACES alike, closer together. The culture of the Belgian capital was not lost on us as we enjoyed the cathedrals, eateries and Beer factory (Delirium) with the same sense of enthusiasm!

## **Brussels Trip: the culmination of the SEI experience**

**By Paul Gough**  
**MACES student 2008-2009**

First of all, at the point of writing having only submitted my dissertation just over a fortnight ago, it

already seems strange writing about myself as a former MACES student and finally leaving Sussex after four years. I have obviously developed quite a personal attachment to the place and many of the students and tutors, but in short this year has

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quite simply been the most rewarding and worthwhile over my time here.

Along with around forty MACES students over the course of 2008-09 (many of whom echo these sentiments), this culminated in our five-day study trip to the centre of the EU back in early June. It would be the final, important academic step to gain a more real appreciation and understanding of who and what we had sought to understand, why we did this, and how this all hung together in what we had learnt, as well as away from the lecture theatres.

Although some arrived from Amsterdam and elsewhere across Europe, the majority travelled together on Monday 8 June from London St Pancras station to Brussels Midi by Eurostar, and were there within two hours. Once we had arrived at the comfortable Jacques Brel hostel on the lunch-time, we were quickly whisked to our first seminars, which would prove to be wide-ranging and thought-provoking.

Our first stop was the UK Representation to the EU, where we listened to British representatives give interesting presentations dealing with migration policy, the EU budget and enlargement, and also started a familiar trait of asking inquisitive questions about how they got into such a career and how they were finding the experience of living in such a cosmopolitan and somewhat unique city that Brussels undoubtedly is.

Indeed, away from what the EU had to offer, the evenings were spent sampling what Brussels as a city had to offer, in terms of local food, drinks, culture and the nightlife. As well as a number of people taking advantage of the allocated day off on the Wednesday to take the train or hire cars to visit Paris, Bruges and Amsterdam - or go shopping around Brussels itself - the more local highlights were undoubtedly the waffles, beer and now hugely popular Café Delirium, which serves over 2,000 different types of beer.

Seminars and presentations followed throughout the week, with representatives from DGs such as Regional Policy, Enlargement, Economic and Financial Affairs and Development, being countered

by a more independent and sometimes critical perspective from thinktanks such as the European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE).

Thursday was spent gaining an insight into the functioning of the EU - touring the European Commission (where around 27,000 people are employed in some capacity), the European Parliament and visiting the Committee of the Regions, where we were given a presentation on the Committee's groundbreaking new white paper on Multi-level Governance.

From what students had learnt, imaginative questions were put to these experts, to gain opinions and insights into current affairs within the EU. These ranged from on the future of the Lisbon Treaty and legal system, to how distant Turkey and Ukraine are from membership, to the EU's response to the current economic crisis, and whether EMU should be a more attractive proposition to Britain in light of this. Some also took advantage of being in Brussels to do some career-based networking, and conduct interviews for invaluable primary source material for their dissertations.

Finally, as people concluded their interviews, touring of the city and buying any souvenirs, Friday was spent looking to the future; and listening to presentations on the upcoming Swedish Presidency by its Permanent Representative to the EU, and its preparations and programme.

Reflecting upon this trip, it served a number of hugely worthwhile purposes, as have been highlighted above. The presentations and seminars were interesting, thought-provoking and stimulated great discussions - both within and outside the classrooms, maybe whilst sipping a cold beer elsewhere. It allowed us to experience what the working culture and atmosphere is like in Brussels, and regardless of where our next career destination may be as most of us move on and away from Sussex now, it should stand us in great stead for understanding what we have been learning, the phenomena that the EU has become, and how it affects all of our daily lives.

# Dispatches

*SEI Dispatches: Views, experiences and updates on the activities of SEI members and practitioner fellows from across Europe and beyond on European events and issues.*

## The 2009 European Elections: Reflections from a practitioner

**By Michael Shackleton**  
**SEI Practitioner Fellow,**  
**European Parliament**



My abiding memory of the 2009 European elections will be standing outside the Liverpool Playhouse theatre, attempting in vain on a beautiful sunny day to encourage passers-by to take an interest in the democratic contest that was going to take place four days later. Nearly all I got for my pains was a series of un-publishable comments about MEPs being as corrupt and worthless as MPs, the elections being seen at best as an opportunity to register an anti-system protest.

And yet it had all seemed so much more positive only a matter of weeks earlier. The Parliament had for the first time mounted an EU-wide campaign centred round the principle of choice for EU citizens. "How much security is too much?", "How much should we tame financial markets?", "How open should our borders be?", all ideas designed to provoke consideration of the different solutions offered by political parties across Europe and to encourage voting based on personal evaluations of those solutions.

And yet in the eyes of most observers, all of the efforts of the institution to make itself heard more clearly proved relatively fruitless. The aver-

age level of participation in the elections fell, if only slightly, to 43%, with the debates continuing to be essentially national rather than European. Indeed the Parliament's own campaign was contested in some Member States who considered it a form of undue intervention. The Italian government, for example, did not consider that there could be a Europe-wide debate about the openness of borders. It was Italy that would decide.

**"As the Parliament's own brochure on the elections made clear: we get the Parliament we deserve. "If you don't send the people you want, remember that someone else will!"**

In reality, relatively few politicians were ready to promote the idea of European choices. One illustration of this was the decision of the Party of European Socialists in December 2008 not to put up a candidate as a potential President of the European Commission. As a result, the chance of having an election campaign revolving around different programmes presented by Presidential candidates from different political parties effectively evaporated. Instead, most electors felt they were faced with the usual set of relatively unknown faces, with little means to choose between them other than on national party lines, and considerable uncertainty as to the impact that their choice would have on EU policy.



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But this did not mean that choices with a European impact were not made. In Yorkshire, the Labour MEP second on the party list was not re-elected, because a relatively small number of people across the constituency turned their backs on the governing party and failed to turn out for him. As a result, the British National Party gained a member for the European Parliament, an event of no small significance at EU as well as national level.

In terms of the political groups, the votes cast for the Conservative party helped the leadership to fulfil its ambition to create its own new group in the Parliament, the European Conservatives and Reformists. It proved possible to reach the minimum threshold of 25 members, laid down in the Parliament's rules for setting up a political group, with relative ease. The success in setting up the group means that Britain will be the only one of the four largest EU states, where the two main parties do not belong to one or other of the two largest political groups in the Parliament. This could have far-reaching effects on the nature of UK membership of the EU.

And more broadly, the vote confirmed that the

Parliament would continue to have a centre-right majority, reflecting the same pattern in the Council and almost certainly, the new Commission. In the vast majority of member states, and certainly all the large ones, the much-touted idea of a social democratic revival in the midst of a financial crisis proved a chimera. Hence the political centre of gravity of the Parliament will not be different from that of the Council in the way that it was, for example, between 1999 and 2004 when a centre-left Council faced a centre-right Parliament. European electors have effectively determined the broad shape of the EU agenda over the next five years, whether they voted or not.

So perhaps I should be less concerned about the personal abuse I met in Liverpool. There can be no complaints about the result. The Parliament's own election material went as far as to suggest that we get the Parliament we deserve. It included a highly controversial quote: "If you don't send the people you want, remember that someone else will!" Well, it is not necessary to go this far to recognise that all of us, whether we voted or not, contributed to the shape of an institution that will have a significant effect on the shape of EU legislation in the years ahead.

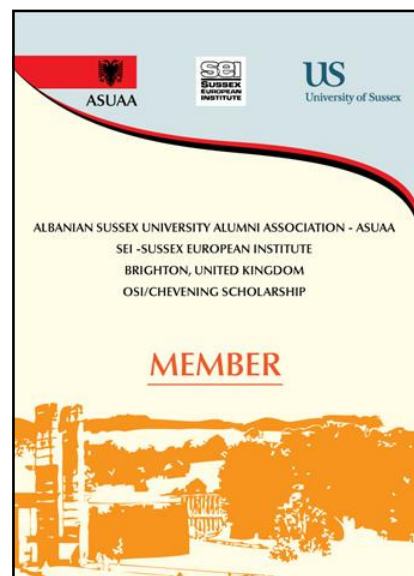
# Albanian Sussex University Alumni Association (ASUAA)

**By Geron Kamberi**  
***MAEP Alumnus 2005-2006***

**On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2008, at the campus bar of the European University of Tirana in Albania; the founding meeting of the Albanian Sussex University Alumni Association (ASUAA) was held.**

This meeting was organised and financed by two alumni who attended postgraduate studies at the Sussex European Institute as OSI/Chevening Scholarship holders, namely Mr. Geron Kamberi (2005-2006) and Ms. Edlira Alku (2005-2006). Since 1993, about 20 students from Albania have attended MA courses, (mainly in Contemporary

European Studies and European Politics) mostly through OSI/Chevening Scholarships. Approximately 13 of them (82%) have returned to Albania and are engaged in different sectors such as academia, public administration and international organiza-



tions. Five of the alumni (18%) are enrolled in PhD studies at different universities in Europe and the USA.

ASUAA aims to create a strong network of contacts between its members, by means of electronic communications as well as periodic social meetings which in turn will enable them to exchange experiences. Clare Sears, Director of British Council in Albania, acknowledging our initiative, wrote us an e-mail stating that *"I am delighted that you have set up this alumni association and are maintaining your network of contacts. It is also fascinating to see what you are doing now and what excellent career choices you have made – I hope studying in the UK aided you with your professional development"*.

**"One of the main objectives of ASUAA is to support and promote the academic values that the SEI offers, especially in academic preparations in the field of European Studies."**

One of the main objectives of ASUAA is to support and promote the academic values that the SEI offers, especially in academic preparations in the field of European Studies. Recently, a very interesting development for ASUAA took place. For the first time, three of our alumni stood for the Parliamentary Elections held on 28 June 2009. Such standing was favored this time by the new adapted electoral system based on the so-called *"closed party list proportional representation"*. Erion Veliq (MAEP, 2004-2005, Head of Group 99 Movement G99) and Gentian Elezi (MAEP 2006-2007) stood in the name of their movement



joining a left wing coalition referred as *Union for Change* (Bashkimi per Ndryshim). Meanwhile, Elisa Spiropali (MAEP 2007- 2008) was part of Socialist Party proportional list in Tirana constituency.

Along with following up the political commitments of our alumni, we have also agreed to establish a common events calendar focused on enhancing relationships between alumni either in Albania or abroad. Within this framework, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and several means of collaboration were discussed with one of the founders and professors of the European University of Tirana, Henri Cili. Via Open Society Institute's (OSI) Network Scholarship Programs (NSP), we have taken the opportunity to apply for the 2009 – 2010 Alumni Grant Program. This program offers grants to NSP alumni to further expand the knowledge gained during their fellowship and make a positive contribution to their home country. We aim to transform ASUAA into a means for former students to keep in touch with one another and the good legacy of Sussex University.



# Opportunities at the SEI

## **ESRC STUDENTSIHPS 2010**

The SEI welcome applications from potential doctoral students interested in applying for ESRC 1+3 and +3 Studentships through the University of Sussex for students starting in autumn 2010. We are looking to support doctoral candidates for three different types of competition:

We will be nominating candidates for **two dedicated ESRC 1+3/+3 Quota Awards** in European Studies/Development Studies offered by the University of Sussex, which will be allocated in spring 2010.

We will be nominating candidates for the **three ESRC 1+3/+3 Quota Awards** offered by the University of Sussex, which will be allocated in Spring 2010.

We will also be nominating candidates for the University of Sussex entries in the **ESRC 1+3/+3 Open Competition**. The University can enter **up to six candidates** for this competition.

Applicants for +3 Awards must already be taking, or have successfully completed, an ESRC recognised research training Masters at Sussex or at another institution.

We especially welcome candidates wishing to conduct research in the following areas of our core research expertise:

**Comparative Politics** - particularly the comparative study of political parties, public policy and comparative European politics.

**European Integration** - particularly European political integration, the political economy of European integration, European security and EU external policy and the domestic politics of European integration, including Euroscepticism.

**British Politics** - particularly party politics, public policy and the politics of migration.

**Citizenship and Migration** - particularly the politics of race and ethnicity.

Please note that ESRC Studentships are only open to applicants from the UK (fees and bursary) and other EU countries (fees only).

For further information about these scholarships please contact: Professor Aleks Szczerbiak for further details: [a.a.szczerbiak@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:a.a.szczerbiak@sussex.ac.uk).

**Applications for 1+3 studentships are also welcome from those taking undergraduate degrees at Sussex.**

## **Other Funding for DPhil students**

### **Sussex International Research Scholarships:**

Non-EU students are eligible to apply for the SIRS which will cover the difference between Home/EU and Overseas fees. These scholarships are for 3 years. Full details are available at:

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/scholarships\\_and\\_bursaries/pg/overseas/orsas.php](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/scholarships_and_bursaries/pg/overseas/orsas.php)

### **For more information contact:**

Prof Aleks Szczerbiak,  
[a.a.szczerbiak@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:a.a.szczerbiak@sussex.ac.uk)

*Applications are also welcome from those already registered for a DPhil at Sussex.*