

## Executive Summary

RECON is an Integrated Project supported by the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme for Research. The project started on 1 January 2007 and will last for five years.

### Key objectives of the project

RECON seeks to clarify whether democracy is possible under conditions of pluralism, diversity and complex multilevel governance. This includes taking proper heed of the challenges to democracy at EU and national levels. RECON spells out three different models for democratic reconstitution: (a) democracy can be reconstituted at the *national level* with a concomitant reframing of the EU as a functional regulatory regime; (b) democracy can be reconstituted through establishing the EU as a *federal state* based on a collective identity; and (c) democracy can be reconstituted through developing a *post-national Union* with an explicit cosmopolitan imprint. RECON assesses which approach to democratic reconstitution is most viable, in empirical and normative terms, through analyzing the EU's constitutionalisation process; the institutional complex at the EU and member state levels; the role and status of gender within the enlarged Europe; the democratic quality and governing capacity of the Union within tax/fiscal and foreign/security policy; and the multilevel configuration of civil society/public sphere. It examines the effects of external transnationalisation on the EU and discerns democratic lessons from comparison with non-European complex multilevel entities. RECON enhances knowledge of the enlargement process – the transition and consolidation of democracy in the new member states; and of the overall challenges posed by globalization to established democracies.

### Major scientific achievements in the second year

The substantive focus of RECON is to study the processes of reconstituting democracy in a multi-levelled Europe. This research requires theoretical knowledge of democracy combined with detailed empirical research in a range of critical policy fields and issue areas. RECON integrates institutional and constitutional research with civil-society and opinion-formation research on the one hand and policy-area studies on gender, tax, social and foreign and security policy on the other as important ingredients in the overall assessment of the quality of democracy in Europe.

In the second year of the project, RECON developed further the theoretical framework of the project by spelling out procedural, epistemic and substantive dimensions of legitimacy. It also addressed the question of democracy beyond the state from interdisciplinary perspectives. Considerable efforts were put into analysing consequences for political legitimacy. This was undertaken both with regard to processes of transnationalisation and supranationalism in the multi-level constellation. The role of statehood with regard to the democratic legitimacy of a European political order was analysed. A particular focus has been on refining the theoretical models in all the research fields covered by the project. Moreover, indicators of democratic performance, with gender-sensitive components, were established, including a differentialised operationalisation of each indicator across the three RECON models. There has thus been considerable progress towards giving the models flesh and bones and integrating the various research foci under the umbrella of three common models.

Research within the *constitutional realm* focused on the evaluation of the Laeken constitutional process from the vantage point of all three RECON models, including an evaluation of the recent Reform Treaty of Lisbon and its dissimilarities from the Constitutional Treaty. Work continued on discerning lessons from Canada's constitutional experience for the EU and vice versa, as with the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty there are even stronger parallels between the Canadian and the European processes. Research also progressed on a comprehensive assessment of European constitution making and its imprint on, and interweaving with, national constitutions, and on a preliminary assessment of the substantive and procedural aspects of the Reform Treaty in the context of the broader framework of EU constitutionalisation. Finally, research on European integration issues from a Baltic perspective progressed.

Within the field of *representation and institutional make-up*, the framework for auditing the democratic performance of EU policies and institutions was established, with a manual setting out indicators and showing how each of these can be operationalised differently across the three RECON models. The empirical research of the Democratic Audit also progressed, and was complemented by two new studies on the shaping of representative claims and on agency governance and its challenges to the EU's system of representation, respectively. Moreover, the three conceptions of the European parliamentary organisational field corresponding to the RECON models were further developed and empirical work within this field progressed.

The main objective of *WP 4 – Justice, Democracy and Gender* is to explore the status of gender equality within the enlarged EU. In the second year, work was completed on the framework thinking for WP 4, setting the theoretical and conceptual context for empirical and additional reflective studies. Empirical criteria for assessing gender justice democracy in the EU were established, gender-sensitive indicators of democratic performance were provided and a first assessment of the quality of gender democracy in the EU was undertaken. Work also consisted in analysing the normative underpinnings of gender justice in an EU context, feeding into the development of a gender equality index by the European Commission.

The research on *civil society and the public sphere* analyses how civil society and the public sphere shape the democratic reconstitution of Europe. Focus in the second year was on mapping, studying and assessing the conditions for the consolidation of mediating structures of a European public sphere and a European civil society. A comparative database on patterns and dynamics of public sphere in EU treaty ratification was established, a systematic assessment of civil society performance in member states was conducted, and the preparation of studies of the 2009 EP elections was initiated. Moreover, substantive progress was made on a broad comparative study on public intellectuals' role and performance in framing national and transnational debate, and research on the interactions between politics and religion in the European integration process was completed.

With regard to the analyses of specific policy areas, the group studying the *foreign and security dimension* collected further empirical data on the system of exchange and information accumulation amongst member states; the EU's role in selected areas of international politics; Turkey's perspective regarding European foreign policy; and the role of parliaments in EU foreign policy. This allowed for a comparison of preliminary empirical findings across partners and a first assessment of the relevance of the RECON models. Furthermore, a collective volume on the parliamentary control of European security policy was published and empirical work for the analysis of media debates was concluded, in order to investigate the

degree to which a European public sphere exists in the field of foreign and security policy.

The group studying the *political economy of the EU* established general indicators from each of the three RECON models and specified indicators for the tax policy field. Research continued on the allocation of tax powers and implications for the RECON models, and the democratic implications of the EU's institutional design and decision-making processes in the field of fiscal and tax policy were analyzed. This analysis includes the democratic implications of the ECJ's case law, wage coordination in Europe as well as European labour law and its reflection of the Union's socio-economic structure. With the inclusion of two new research teams, work also progressed on establishing an understanding of the relationship between social welfare and RECON's three models and the development of an analytical framework to investigate how the introduction of consumer choice affects the pooling of risks in European welfare states.

The research on *identity formation and enlargement* explores the crucial question of how much trust and commonality is needed to establish democracy. In particular, it analyses the formation of collective identities with regard to enlargement processes. In the second year, criteria for evaluating the salience of collective identities within a theory of democratic deliberative supranationalism were outlined, the question of the characteristics of collective identity in the three RECON models was analysed and variables for its operationalisation in empirical research were identified. Public discourses in post-2004 EU member states were analysed with the aim to study the impact of institutional reform on collective-identity construction. Empirical studies of European identity were conducted by means of comparative focus-group scenarios and in-depth interviews with selected groups in Hungary and Poland.

Finally, research on *global transnationalisation and democratisation* examines how globalization and transnationalisation processes shape the conditions for democracy within and beyond Europe, and compares the European case with particularly relevant non-European instances of democracy and democratization. In the second year, the theoretical frameworks of the two subprojects were established and the relevant conceptual distinctions and empirical indicators pertaining to the RECON models were spelled out. Empirical research activities focused on the internal structures of transnational governance, illuminating the intertwinements of European regulatory policies and global governance arrangements such as the WTO and the ILO. Conflict-of-law approaches to legitimate European and trans-national governance were also spelled out and refined. Moreover, focus was on clarifying RECON's conception of cosmopolitan democracy and, in the extension of this, a set of criteria for assessing state-based cosmopolitanism, with empirical reference to Canada was provided.

### **Dissemination and expected results**

RECON's research brings forth knowledge of great relevance for the ongoing process of reforming European and national institutions. RECON propounds its research-based knowledge through a wide range of means, some of which will have direct impact on policy development and much of which will have a more indirect but nevertheless potentially important effect through the way in which it helps frame the public debate and the very manner in which problems and solutions are understood, publicly talked about, and eventually handled in policy making and implementing agencies. RECON's combined theoretical and empirical analysis will be useful to citizens as well as to policy makers and analysts. It allows spelling out the alternatives; systematize the options available; aid in the prioritization of choice opportunities; and helps to clarify the normative quality of policy choices.

RECON aims to contribute to enhancing the state-of-the-art of research within fields of great importance to the European Community, and the project is dedicated to the idea of transforming the research findings and scientific knowledge into policy advice. RECON's dissemination strategy recognizes that dissemination must extend well beyond the academic community and must be based on more than scientific publications. Studying the EU's democratic challenges attracts interest from informed citizens, interest groups and policy makers throughout Europe. RECON aims to disseminate project-generated knowledge and research findings to the community of users and stakeholders, such as policy makers at national and European levels, civil society actors, non-RECON academics, as well as the wider public.

In the second year, RECON's preliminary research findings and scientific knowledge were spread through a wide range of dissemination mechanisms. First and foremost, the research resulted in numerous scientific publications in the form of articles in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, working papers and reports. The two publication series of RECON have proven to be a successful channel for the publication of ongoing research within the project. A total of 20 *RECON Online Working Papers* were published, which are pre-print manuscripts on democracy and the democratisation of the political order in Europe. The series reaches out to a broad research community by its inclusion in several online archives, and is perceived as an attractive publication channel also by non-members. As an example, a working paper by James Caporaso and Sidney Tarrow (2008/01) was downloaded 520 times in 2008, and one by Thomas Risse and Jana Katharina Grabowsky (2008/04) was downloaded 407 times from RECON's website. Three reports were moreover published in the *RECON Report Series*, each of which was a collection of papers from a previous RECON workshop. The reports hold a high academic and editorial standard, and some will be elaborated and submitted as anthologies with academic publishing houses.

A total of 11 consortium workshops were organised in the second year, in addition to some smaller seminars and outreach events. Several RECON workshops and other public events attracted targeted and/or general attention to the project. Among these were a Baltic Expert Workshop in Riga, which brought together leading scholars from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Hungary and Ukraine for discussions on European integration issues from a Baltic perspective, a workshop in Brussels on the intellectual debates on Europe in national contexts, with an audience constituted by academics, representatives of the European civil society, the European Commission, journalists and students, and which was referred to in *Le Monde*, and an outreach seminar in León which was attended by a select number of key Spanish journalists and opinion-makers, which combined a presentation of the concluded 'EU-constituency' project with the impact of its findings for ongoing RECON research. Some workshops were also organized with other projects, such as a joint ConstEPS/RECON conference in Bremen and a workshop in cooperation with CONNEX and the European Network for Canadian Studies in Florence. In addition, a panel on 'new research agendas on gender politics and policies in the EU' was organised by RECON's WP 4 at the Women's Worlds Congress in Madrid, bringing together four ongoing FP6 projects, and RECON-affiliated researchers organised joint panels at other international academic conferences. In addition to attracting attention to the project's research and promoting dialogue with policy makers, civil society and the research community, RECON events also served to strengthen integration of the research across work packages and research teams.

Moreover, research findings and project-generated knowledge were presented at more than 70 conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures in 2008, including important international academic conferences such as those organised by the Political Studies Association (PSA), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), the International Studies Association (ISA), the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) and the International Political Science Association (IPSA). Policy makers and the wider community were addressed at a number of other events, a small sample of which were conferences organised by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Norwegian Society for European Studies (ECSA) and the European Humanist Federation. Finally, teaching and training activities at partner institutions and beyond have ensured dissemination of RECON's research to students and academics across Europe.

The primary tool for information on the research conducted in the project is the RECON website: [www.reconproject.eu](http://www.reconproject.eu), which reaches out to a broad audience that continued to increase in 2008. There were a total of 57,700 visitors in the second year, as compared to 36,000 in the first year, and on average, 4,800 individuals visited the website each month. Moreover, two issues of the [RECON Newsletter](#) were published in 2008, containing information on research activities, summaries or reports of past events and new publications, information on upcoming events and other news and appointments. New to the second year was the inclusion of policy memos or comments by RECON-affiliated researchers relating ongoing research to current societal and political developments. In addition, the [RECON leaflet](#), which contains basic information on the project and presents its main research questions in a comprehensible manner, continued to be distributed widely by each partner institution.

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## RECON partner institutions

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	<b>Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna</b> Institute for European Integration Research (EIF)	OEAW
	<b>Center of Political and Constitutional Studies, Madrid</b> (until August 2008)	CEPC
	<b>Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest</b> Institute of Sociology	ELTE
	<b>European University Institute</b> Department of Law	EUI
	<b>Freie Universität Berlin</b> Otto-Suhr-Institute for Political Science	FUB
	<b>Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic</b> Institute of Sociology	ASCR
	<b>Jagiellonian University, Krakow</b> Centre for European Studies	JUK
	<b>Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt</b> Institute of Political Science	JWGU
	<b>London School of Economics and Political Science</b> Department of International Relations	LSE
	<b>Queen's University Belfast</b> Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics (CAWP)	QUB
	<b>Riga Graduate School of Law</b>	RGSL
	<b>Sabanci University, Istanbul</b> Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	SABU
	<b>Spanish National Research Council, Madrid</b> Institute of Public Goods and Policies (IPP)	CSIC
	<b>Université Libre de Bruxelles</b> Institute for European Studies	ULB
	<b>University of Auckland</b> Europe Institute	UOA
	<b>University of Bremen</b> Jean Monnet Centre for European Studies (CEuS) Centre for European Law and Politics (ZERP)	UniHB
	<b>University of León</b>	ULEON
	<b>University of Mannheim (affiliated partner)</b> Mannheim Center for European Social Research	MZES
	<b>University of Reading</b> School of Sociology, Politics and International Relations	UoR
	<b>Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam</b> Department of Political Science	VUA
	<b>Peace Research Institute Frankfurt</b>	PRIF
	<b>University of Bath</b> Department of European Studies and Modern Languages	BATH