

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 multinational *federal state*; 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 third 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 third year of the project, the *theoretical framework* was developed further as guidelines were established for the research on the three RECON models in all WPs. Based on the findings of the different WPs, the associated WP leaders collected and integrated the respective research results achieved so far and delivered substantial guidelines regarding further research on the models. Central in this regard was the midterm conference and the joint report, both serving as: crucial collections of the work undertaken in all WPs in the first half of the project; means to operationalise the models to the empirical research in all WPs, and; vehicles in the planning of activities in the second half the project. Further, the elaboration of a theoretical-methodological framework for the empirical analysis of normative belief systems in order to test the empirical viability of the RECON models was finished, and progress was made on establishing the conceptual relationship between democracy, statehood and legitimacy.

Researchers working on the *constitutional dimension* continued to apply the assessment criteria already developed to evaluate the Laeken constitutional process, as well as the Lisbon Treaty process and subsequent incorporation. Work proceeded on establishing the relevant lessons from the EU's and Canada's constitutional experiences. Of particular relevance here is the development of a new theoretical conception of the constitution and constitution making – constitutional synthesis – that is more suitable to the EU and even Canadian experiences than the perspectives in place. How this perspective sits with the three RECON models was also established. Moreover, the impact of EU Treaties on national constitutions in new and old member states was further examined to come closer to an understanding of the manner in which national constitutional orders are integrated into a European constitutional arrangement. This includes research on the European constitutional dimension as seen from a Baltic perspective.

Within the field of *representation and institutional make-up*, researchers continued work on operationalising the theoretical and methodological frameworks developed during the first two years of the project, and continued research activities on the Democratic Audit. The analysis has focused on the quality of participation, the quality of representation, and the quality of deliberation within the representative politics of the EU. WP 3 researchers have also made progress with the process traces in the third year, by collecting and coding data on the Quality of Discourse in selected European Parliament debates. Moreover, the conception of a European parliamentary organisational field and how it corresponds to the RECON models was further developed. Empirical work within this field progressed, in addition to work on linking theoretical work on political representation to the empirical analysis of the 2009 EP elections, and research on agency governance and its challenge to the EU system of representation.

The group researching *justice, democracy and gender* aims at assessing gender justice and democracy at the EU supranational level and in test cases of EU member states, as well as assessing the three RECON models in the light of gender democracy. In the third year, work progressed steadily towards finalising the empirical assessments of gender justice and democracy at both the EU level and at the national level. The particular cases selected for these assessments are the Recast Equality Directive (where the co-decision procedure was in effect) and the Goods and Services Directive (which was a consultative process). The empirical work provided a platform for the early consideration of the RECON models in the light of research findings. Further, WP 4 continued its normative investigations of gender justice by addressing the notion of cosmopolitanism through Martha Nussbaum's theory of justice.

The group analysing how *civil society and the public sphere* shape the democratic reconstitution of Europe focused in the third period on empirical and theoretical analysis of how civil society and the public sphere shape democratic norms and practices, and mapping preconditions and indicators for assessing the three RECON models based on findings on the role and performance of intellectuals, mass media, civil society and parliamentarians in EU democratic constitutional reforms in old and new member states. Aims were achieved in studies within the sub-fields on 'how national intellectuals debate Europe' and on understanding emerging pro- and anti-European cleavage structures by exploring the shaping of popular preferences, whereas substantial progress was made on specifying empirical indicators for assessing the RECON models through parliamentary discourse analysis, on developing and testing the RECON models in the context of the 2009 EP election campaigns by political parties and on patterns and dynamics of participation in EP elections and on patterns and dynamics of participation in EP elections.

The group studying the *foreign and security dimension* aims to assess the status as well as the prospects for democracy within this critical field in Europe. In line with research conducted during the previous project period, empirical data collection in the third year has focussed in particular on: institutional change in the EU's External Action Service; the general system of exchange and accumulation of information and knowledge amongst the member states; and European elites' interpretation of fundamental norms. Further, the perceptions of European citizens has been examined through an analysis of public opinion polls as well as analyses of media debates. Finally, selected areas of the EU's international politics with a special view to the consistency between internal and external norms have continued to be in focus.

The research on the *political economy of the EU* analyses the relationship between the public steering of the economy (public finance, tax policy and social policy) and democracy in the EU's multi-level political system. In the third period, they refined the empirical indicators for reconstructing and assessing the case studies covered (fiscal, tax, labour and social policy plus the regulation of free movement of workers, capital and state liability for infringements of Community law) in line with the RECON models. This was mainly achieved through finalising the report on the fiscal policy in the EU. The study of conceptions of citizenship and solidarity in European regulation and case law was completed, and research continued on the establishment 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 the third year, the main task has been to conclude and compare the empirical research on the processes of collective identity formation conducted in the context of the RECON models, and to establish criteria for evaluating the salience of collective identities within a theory of democratic deliberative supranationalism. Other central activities were: research on euroscepticism; research on identity patterns among students in three countries; and research on enlargement, the collective identity formation in Turkey, the European norms as cosmopolitan values and gender equality in the Turkish accession negotiations.

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 third year, the research group has continued to explore the link between democratisation in Europe and globalisation in the wider international system, focussing on transnational governance and regulation in the fields of GMOs and chemicals, social regulation, and governance arrangements considered in terms of administrative law, legal and institutional analysis. Researchers also continued to emphasize the social dimension of democratic constitutionalism. The research group also continued to examine the cosmopolitan pull on the state-centred model, through comparing the EU with Canada, as a possible example of 'state-based cosmopolitanisation'. This included refining relevant conceptual distinctions and empirical indicators in view of the theoretical frameworks, and work on assessing Canada against these criteria has progressed.

Dissemination and expected results

RECON's research generates knowledge of great relevance for the ongoing process of reforming European and national institutions. RECON disseminates 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 third year, RECON's preliminary research findings and scientific knowledge was 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 19 *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. The series is available at: <http://www.reconproject.eu/projectweb/portalproject/RECONWorkingPapers.html>. Four 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 standard, and some will be elaborated and submitted as anthologies with academic publishing houses.

A total of 13 consortium workshops were organised in the third year, in addition to some smaller seminars and work package meetings. Several RECON workshops and other public events attracted targeted and/or general attention to the project. Among these was, firstly, the WP 2 workshop on 'lessons from Europe's and Canada's constitutional experiences' (D31) was staged in Oslo in March 2009. The event was organised by ARENA in collaboration with the Nordic Association for Canadian Studies (NACS) and European Network for Canadian Studies (ENCS), and brought together leading scholars on European integration and Canadian constitutional politics as well as civil society representatives. Secondly, WP 5 findings on Euroscepticism were presented at the Annual ARENA Conference on 11 December, 'Euroscepticism in perspective'. The audience of around 80 persons consisted of academics, politicians and journalists as well as students and other civil society representatives. Thirdly, the RECON Midterm Conference (D58) held in Prague in October brought together more than 100 academics, policy makers, civil society actors and representatives from the general public, journalists and students. The conference was opened by Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In addition to attracting attention to the project's research and promoting dialogue with policy makers and civil society, RECON's workshops also served to strengthen integration of the research across work packages and research teams, and the midterm conference served as a meeting point for all RECON

researchers. Day two of the conference was devoted to parallel WP sessions, allowing for all WPs to meet, present their research results and make further plans for cooperation.

Some RECON workshops were also organized jointly with other projects and institutions. The WP 9 workshop ‘The social embeddedness of transnational markets’ was organised in cooperation with the Collaborative Research Centre Transformations of the State (CRC 597) Project A 1 (Trade Liberalisation and Social Regulation in Transnational Structures). The WP 5 follow-up workshop ‘European Stories – how intellectuals debate Europe’ in Oxford was organised in cooperation with the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford, and gathered academics from within and without RECON to investigate how intellectuals conceive of their country’s national identity and its position inside (or outside) the European Union. In addition, leader of WP 4 Yvonne Galligan organised a round table discussion at the first European Politics and Gender Conference in January 2009 in Belfast, and a double panel at the 7th European Feminist Research Conference in Utrecht in June 2009. Other participating FP6 projects were EUROSPHERE, FEMCIT, QUING and ATHENA.

Research findings and project-generated knowledge were presented at more than 75 conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures in 2009, including important international academic conferences such as those organised by the European Union Studies Association (EUSA), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), the European Sociological Association (ESA), the International Political Science Association (IPSA), the American Political Science Association (APSA), the European Network for Social Policy Analysis (ESPAnet) and the International Studies Association (ISA). Policy makers and the wider community were addressed at a number of other events, a small sample of which were conferences organised by the CINEFOGO Network of Excellence, The Centre for Equal Treatment in Luxembourg and The Committee of the Regions. RECON-affiliated researchers also organised and chaired joint panels at the ECPR Joint Sessions in Lisbon, the IPSA 21st World Congress in Santiago, the EUSA Conference in Los Angeles, and the ECPR General Conference in Potsdam, which all served to present and disseminate findings from the project. 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, which reaches out to a broad audience that continued to increase in 2009. There were a total of 44,909 visitors in the third year, and on average, 3,742 individuals visited the website each month. Moreover, two issues of the [RECON Newsletter](#) were published in 2009, containing information on research activities, summaries or reports of past events and new publications, information on upcoming events and other news and appointments. Also in the third year, they included policy memos and comments by RECON-affiliated researchers relating ongoing research to contemporary events. 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

	University of Oslo (coordinator) ARENA – Centre for European Studies	ARENA
	Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna Institute for European Integration Research (EIF)	OEAW
	Center of Political and Constitutional Studies, Madrid <i>(until August 2008)</i>	CEPC
	Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest Institute of Sociology	ELTE
	European University Institute Department of Law	EUI
	Freie Universität Berlin Otto-Suhr-Institute for Political Science	FUB
	Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic Institute of Sociology	ASCR
	Jagiellonian University, Krakow Centre for European Studies	JUK
	Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt Institute of Political Science	JWGU
	London School of Economics and Political Science Department of International Relations	LSE
	Queen's University Belfast Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics (CAWP)	QUB
	Riga Graduate School of Law <i>(until December 2009)</i>	RGSL
	Sabanci University, Istanbul Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	SABU
	Spanish National Research Council, Madrid Institute of Public Goods and Policies (IPP)	CSIC
	Université Libre de Bruxelles Institute for European Studies	ULB
	University of Auckland Europe Institute	UOA
	University of Bremen Jean Monnet Centre for European Studies (CEuS) Centre for European Law and Politics (ZERP)	UniHB
	University of León	ULEON
	University of Mannheim (affiliated partner) Mannheim Center for European Social Research	MZES
	University of Reading School of Sociology, Politics and International Relations	UoR
	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam Department of Political Science	VUA
	Peace Research Institute Frankfurt	PRIF
	University of Bath Department of European Studies and Modern Languages <i>(until March 2009)</i>	BATH
	University of Hamburg Institute for Political Science	UHAM