

## 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 fourth 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 fourth year of the project, the *theoretical* framework was developed further through continued focus on the development of a political theory of the European polity by analyses of the relationship between democracy, statehood and legitimacy, and the conceptual relationship between these three concepts. Moreover, this work package altered the three RECON models on the basis of normative and conceptual assessments and feedback from RECON's midterm conference. WP 1 coordinates the different WPs, and it puts together a coherent edited volume wherein each WP applies the RECON framework to its subject-area and discerns findings - with due attention to the particular methodological issues and the main lines of debate within the respective area. The emphasis is on how the RECON framework may best be used to shed light on the democratic issues and challenges faced by Europe today.

Researchers working on the *constitutional dimension* seeks to establish the democratic merits of the emerging European constitutional order in relation to the three RECON models. In the

fourth year main lessons from the Laeken and Lisbon processes were discerned, and the EU's constitutional experience was situated in the broader framework of constitutional theory to the effect that a distinct constitutional theory for the EU was devised. Moreover, in-depth analyses of the different episodes of the rise and fall of the Constitutional Treaty were concluded in light of a two-level theory of supranational democratic constitutionalisation. Data collection continued on constitutional provisions, parliamentary debates and case-law in EU member states and candidate countries and were disseminated through the website on the Europeanisation of national constitutions.

Within the field of *representation and institutional make-up*, and as part of a Democratic Audit of the EU, researchers completed the data set with a fully coded Discourse Quality Index of European and national parliamentary debates for selected topics, and data analysis progressed. Work further progressed on developing three conceptions of the European parliamentary field corresponding to the RECON models, including specific case studies to trace actual inter-parliamentary interactions between national parliaments and with the European Parliament. The results of a survey of MEPs were analysed to establish nature of inter-parliamentary contacts. Research on agency governance continued, and a survey of the professional staff of nine EU agencies was conducted and first empirical results presented. An analysis of how the representative claims of political parties in the 2009 European elections fit the RECON models was completed, as was also a study on the Committee of the Regions in relation to the three RECON models.

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 fourth year, a theoretical model of democracy looking at public decision-making processes through a gender lens ('gender democracy') was outlined and the contingent treatment of gender interests in democratic politics at EU level investigated. Gender democracy was assessed in three member states, and the aim is to provide a rich qualitative assessment of the extent to which national and European decision-making processes are gender-democratic in the final year. WP 4 had an additional focus on interrogating the normative underpinnings of gender justice in an EU setting, and addressing the sensitivity of the three models to gender justice and democracy.

The group analysing how *civil society and the public sphere* shape the democratic reconstitution of Europe focused in the fourth year on pro- and anti-European cleavage structures in national and European election campaigns. Evaluations of the EU's legitimacy were systematically investigated and a categorisation of Euro-scepticism in relation to EU justificatory discourse was devised. Further, the potential of the Internet as a communicative infrastructure of EU democracy was investigated. Researchers assessed the nature of Euroscepticism across countries and websites, and the extent to which it featured in the election campaign and results. The RECON models were assessed through a discourse analysis of parliamentary debates on the Lisbon Treaty ratification and key democratic reforms and through an analysis of party campaigns to the 2009 EP elections. A broad comparative study on intellectual debates in Europe in national contexts was concluded and published in the fourth year.

The group studying *the foreign and security dimension* assesses the status as well as the prospects for democracy within this critical field in Europe. The depth and form of integration in this policy field was examined through a study of the COREU/CORTESY network, as well as by studies on the institutions and decision-making processes in the field of foreign and

security policy. Moreover, a study examining how parliaments at different levels are involved in the ESDP was concluded. Taken together, these studies suggest a clear move beyond intergovernmentalism in this policy area. With regard to the global manifestations of the EU, the perceptions and policies of a key external partner, Turkey, were investigated, and the potential impact of the EU accession process assessed. Further, the ‘actual’ consistency between internal and external policies was examined with reference to concrete cases. So far, the picture is mixed with regard to the extent to which the EU consistently adheres to cosmopolitan principles in its global activities.

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 fourth year, a study on the democratic implications of the principles governing state liability was finalised, demonstrating that distributive justice criteria are an essential element of state liability in the EU. An analysis of fiscal policy rules and the sustainability of public debt in Europe was also completed. Three case studies on long-term care, education and employment services were considerably elaborated. There was focus on the nature of social insurance as practised in the EU, and the consequences this has for the EU’s democratic legitimacy. A study on social welfare and democracy in Europe was completed, as was a study investigating the impact of enlargement, globalisation and the pressures within the EU for harmonisation on the nature of social models in the EU.

The research on *identity formation and enlargement* analyses the formation of collective identities with regard to enlargement processes. A major focus in the fourth year was to consider how enlargement has influenced collective identity formation and, the possible forms of democracy in the new Europe. Research on migrations and identity was completed and summarized. Empirical studies on European identity in Polish society continued, including studies of the young urban population, analysis of the transformation of Polish collective identity and of the 2009 EP election campaign. This research mapped the strength and nature of tensions between levels of identification: local and regional, national and European. Finally, research was conducted on collective identity formation in Turkey and gender equality in the Turkish accession negotiations.

Finally, research on *global transnationalisation and democratisation* examines how globalisation and transnationalisation processes shape the conditions for democracy within and beyond Europe. First, work towards establishing the character of key EU governance norms and processes in comparison to other transnational fora was conducted with studies of the fields of GMOs and chemicals and social regulation. The social embedding of transnational markets was assessed through studies of EU-WTO relations and transnational governance, and liberalisation and privatisation in the field of telecommunication. Further studies focused on the European Employment Strategy, the policy debate on EU regulation of animal cloning, and the growing structure of security governance as a formally non-hierarchical network structure. Second, the EU and Canada was compared on critical points with the purpose of establishing the degree of post-national cosmopolitan convergence.

### **Dissemination and expected results**

RECON’s research brings forth 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 fourth 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 books and book chapters, articles in peer-reviewed journals, reports and working papers. The two publication series of RECON have proven to be successful channels for the publication of ongoing research within the project. The *RECON Online Working Papers* are pre-print manuscripts on democracy and the democratisation of the political order in Europe and reach out to a broad research community by its inclusion in several online archives. A total of 29 papers were published in 2010, as compared to 19 and 20 issues in each of the previous years, reflecting the increased level of activity within the project and the escalating number of publications as conclusions can be drawn from the various empirical studies, data collections and analyses. RECON's online working papers were frequently downloaded also in 2010. The two most popular working papers in 2010: 'Euro-scepticism as reactive identity formation' and 'European identity constructions in public debates on wars and military interventions' were downloaded 622 and 594 times respectively from RECON's website, pointing to the relevance of and topical interest in the project's research and findings. In the first four years of the project, 89 working papers have been issued. The series is available at: <http://www.reconproject.eu/projectweb/portalproject/RECONWorkingPapers.html>. Two reports were published in the *RECON Report Series*. RECON Report 11, which contains the proceedings from the RECON midterm conference, appeared in June and was already downloaded 171 times at the end of the year in addition to the 250 print copies that were distributed free of charge. The most popular report in 2010: 'The Lisbon Treaty and national constitutions: Europeanisation and democratic implications' was downloaded 604 times, again testifying to the topicality of RECON's research. The reports hold a high academic and editorial standard, and some have been or will be elaborated and published as anthologies with academic publishing houses. Furthermore, RECON's publications database which is publicly available on the project website was continuously updated in the fourth year and now includes close to 1,200 items. The database is a key element to ensure the broadest possible dissemination of project results as well as access to and overview of the activities and findings of all partners.

A total of seven consortium workshops were organised in 2010. Some of these attracted targeted and/or general attention to the project, contributing to increased cooperation between

the project and the wider research community. In addition, RECON's workshops served to strengthen integration of the research across work packages and research teams. This was particularly so with regard to a WP 6 workshop in Oslo and a WP 5 workshop in Krakow, which gathered all WP partners. In the fourth year, preparations also started for the two RECON outreach conferences to be staged in 2011. Findings and concrete policy advice will be presented to stakeholders, first in Brussels on 19 May 2011 and then in Oslo on 24 November 2011. The latter is part of the official programme of the University of Oslo's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary and will be staged in conjunction with RECON's concluding conference.

Research findings and project-generated knowledge were presented and disseminated at more than 50 conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures in 2010, including important international academic conferences such as those organised by ECPR, EUSA, IPSA, UACES, ESA, APSA and PSA. Two workshops were organised by RECON-affiliated researchers at the ECPR Joint Sessions in Münster on 22-27 March, which both gathered RECON researchers as well as non-affiliated scholars. In addition, RECON research was discussed and presented at a variety of more targeted events organised by institutions, associations or research programmes such as the Nordic Network in Political Theory, the Canada-Europe Transatlantic Dialogue, the German Association of Political Science, the Research Programme on Democracy at the University of Oslo, the Collaborative Research Centre Transformations of the State, the Cluster of Excellence 'The Formation of Normative Orders', the NEAC Network of European Active Citizens, the International Gender and Language Association and the World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies. Policy makers and the wider community were addressed at a number of other events, such as seminars organised by the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and the Delegation of the EU to Norway. 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. There were a total of 53,342 visitors in 2010. As compared to 2009, the number of visitors increased from an average of 3,742 to 4,445 each month. Among the most active organisations visiting the RECON website is the European Parliament, where a total of 570 users accessed the website in the fourth year. Moreover, three issues of the [RECON Newsletter](#) were published in 2010, spreading news and information about the project's progress. The newsletter presents research activities, publications, events (past and upcoming), other news and appointments, as well as policy memos and commentaries relating ongoing research to current societal and political developments. In 2010, these were also made separately available on a new web page for RECON commentaries and policy memos, testifying to the increased focus on generating concrete policy advice during the final stage of the project. 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

	<b>University of Oslo (coordinator)</b> ARENA – Centre for European Studies	ARENA
	<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> (until December 2009)	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 (until March 2009)	BATH
	<b>University of Hamburg</b> Institute for Political Science	UHAM