

The EUI turns 25: Foundation and Research

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[1] The European Union has turned 50. This year the European University Institute (EUI), turns 25. Marked by the European Commissioners' unprecedented transfer of one of their regular meetings from Brussels/Strasbourg to the EUI's campus in Florence, on November 7th 2001, and by further academic events during the year, the 25th anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate and examine the EUI's special place within European academe and its important contribution to the European intellectual landscape. 25 years of the EUI further offers a window upon the last quarter-century of achievements, changes and challenges shaping European integration and European culture.

Background

[2] The EUI has a special and complex character. Its role is to pursue advanced high quality research and post-graduate formation in the human and political sciences. In the words of its founding Convention its mission is to contribute to "the intellectual life of Europe through its activity and influence, and to the development of Europe's cultural and academic heritage in its unity and in its diversity". Additionally the EUI serves as the depository for the vast historical archives of the EU and a growing resource of important private papers associated with European integration.

[3] First proposed at the Hague Congress in 1948, a project for a Europe-wide research university took shape at the Messina Conference 'European re-launch' in 1955. A long process of complex logistical preparation and political approval followed. In 1972 the EUI was established by the then 6 members of the European Community. It opened its doors at the Badia Fiesolana in Fiesole, just outside Florence, in 1976: 25 years ago. The EUI is not directly a Community/EU institution, but rather a parallel intergovernmental foundation. The EUI member-states, by individual accession (see list [1]), are the EU 15. Like the EU, the EUI is in the process of agreeing new accession treaties with the candidate Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC). Indeed, in this process the EUI anticipates the EU: Hungary and Poland have already signed interim conventions.

[4] In 1992 a further element was added to the EUI with the creation of what has become the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (the RSCAS). Focussing specifically upon contemporary European issues, in particular policy research and European integration, the RSCAS has developed an interdisciplinary platform for discussion of European issues in interaction between academics and policy-makers.

Work

[5] As its name suggests, in its primary academic function the EUI is both something more specialised than a traditional university, having no undergraduate students and only 4 academic departments (Economics, History, Law, and the Social and Political Sciences), and, as one of the largest and most successful post-graduate programmes in these disciplines, something rather more extensive than a research institute.

[6] At 25 the EUI has conferred over a 1000 doctoral degrees for these defended before international juries. Currently almost 550 students from 30 countries pursue research at the EUI. Around 90% of this intake are drawn from the EU 15 plus Hungary, Poland, Norway and Switzerland and receive 3- or 4-year national scholarships. Additional candidates sponsored by the Italian State are recruited from the rest of the CEEC and the non-European Mediterranean area. Students also come individually from the USA and elsewhere. In addition to the PhD and Masters in Law degrees pursued by its students, the EUI, with its RSCAS, has supported the work of some 500 resident senior international scholars including Professors and 1-year Jean Monnet Fellows. The EUI community is a unique multi-lingual, multi-cultural interdisciplinary intellectual resource for Europe.

[7] Prioritising an evolving agenda of topical research areas and themes, the EUI Departments include a distinguished teaching record and strong concentrations of research in the law of human rights, in EU competition law, regarding the politics of the CEEC and EU enlargement, in the history of 16th-17th century European expansion and c20 institutional integration, and concerning the economics of EMU. Professors and students publish extensively on all aspects of European politics, society, economics, external relations and culture.

[8] In accordance with its trans-European identity and role, the EUI invests actively in international academic networks, hosting workshops and eminent visiting scholars, taking part in exchange programmes, and managing (with the London School of Economics) a large scale library fellowships scheme, the European Union Social Science Information Research Facility (EUSSIRF). Approximately 70% of EUI graduates are employed in academic careers across Europe, among whom many teach in a country other than that of their origin while maintaining close links to their former universities and the EUI.

[9] In respect of both its academic and its broader cultural role the EUI seeks to bring together the expertise of theorists and practitioners. Many students enrich their research by means of practical experience during internships/stages in the European Commission, Parliament and Council, at the European Central Bank, World Trade Organisation, United Nations, World Bank, and OECD. Of the 30% of students who do not follow academic careers a large proportion work in leading professional positions in these institutions and the first generations of EUI students are now reaching the peak of their careers: EUI alumni include a Government Minister, an MEP, and high

concentrations of senior officials in and advisors to the international institutions in Geneva, Washington, London and Brussels. The EUI has established itself as a favoured platform for Europe's political leaders speaking about their assessments of and aspirations regarding European issues. In collaboration New York University the EUI jointly hosted the 1999 'Progressive Governance in the 21st Century' conference involving Presidents Cardoso, Clinton and Prodi, and Prime Ministers Blair, D'Alema and Jospin and Chancellor Schroeder. Since 1995 the prestigious Jean Monnet Lectures introduced by the EUI's first Principal, Max Kohnstamm, and Commission President Roy Jenkins in 1977, have been given by: Professor Guiliano Amato, both Prime Minister of Italy and Professor at the EUI, the Prime Minister of Finland, Paavo Lipponen, Mary McAleese, President of the Republic of Ireland, Professor Romano Prodi, Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, Dr Peter Sutherland, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, and Dr Hans Tietmeyer, President of the Deutschen Bundesbank, . In 1999 the EUI hosted the keynote speech of President Khatami during the first official visit made to a European Union country by an Iranian Head of State since the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Future

[10] In 25 years of the EUI may be seen the realisation of a key ambition of the founders of European integration: the advancement of a European intellectual, as part of a wider cultural, identity. The EUI long predates the Maastricht Treaty's designation of education, youth and culture as new areas of Community responsibility, having itself established a tradition in which a Europe of shared values, common interests and valuable national and regional diversities is both studied by and lived in a vibrant academic milieu. The EUI's is a multicultural community seeking to explore Europe's common concerns while preserving its members' diversity of perspectives and traditions; the EUI's institutional complexity closely echoes that of the EU. In this way the EUI is in a position to offer special insights into these challenging questions of cultural citizenship as well as the policy dimensions of integration. At the EUI integration is at work in all its complexity and opportunity. The current Principal, Dr Patrick Masterson, likes to call the EUI a "province of the mind". Certainly its students and scholars consider that their engagement in its unique environment crucially colours their work, expanding and transforming intellectual horizons. In its 25 years the EUI has educated a truly supranational academic generation.

[11] The 25th anniversary, celebrating past and present achievements, is also an opportunity to look into the future. The EUI is much the same age as its current generation of students: like them, it is in the early, formative stages of a promising career. The EUI now faces 3 inter-linked challenges. It must integrate a large body of students and cultural traditions from the CEEC in furtherance of European enlargement, and must do so while maintaining its special character as a small institution in which – by necessity – academics from all cultures work closely side by side. It must continue to set the pace of basic and policy-oriented research in its various disciplines. It must assemble the institutional resources to accommodate these processes and to achieve its mission of being a valuable independent intellectual resource for Europe in addressing the challenging issues which confront it.

(1) 1972: Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. 1975: Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. 1986: Greece. 1987: Spain. 1989: Portugal. 1997: Austria, Finland, and Sweden.

(2) See for full listings: <http://www.iue.it/PUB/JML.html>