

democratic government. The most viable democracy may well turn out to be the one that, in response to various problems of ineffectiveness and illegitimacy experienced on the mass and elite levels, most actively and creatively puts to use its capacities for self-revision.

This is an abstract of a paper presented to the CSD Seminar on 27 October 1994. Claus Offe is Professor of Sociology and Politics at the University of Bremen.

Annus Bruxellana

by Richard Whitman

The European Union has embarked upon a 'long-1995' of debate on the agenda for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on its future direction. The publication of, and subsequent media interest in, a paper entitled *Reflections on European Policy* (September 1994), authored by Wolfgang Schauble and Karl Lamers of the CDU/CSU governing coalition in Germany, provided the catalyst for the Europeanwide discussion, set to conclude at the Madrid European Council in December. Of the paper's five-fold set of proposals, one in particular has captured news headlines: the identification of an existent "hard core" of five Member States that were most committed to European integration and were designated to push ahead with the process. At the "core of the hard core" were to be enhanced Franco-German relations. A cacophony of objections followed. The exclusion of founder-member, Italy, from the hard core generated a virulent reaction from the Italian government and briefly united the Berlusconi government and its opposition in condemnation of the proposal. In the same week, the Schauble/Lamers proposal was conflated with a *Europe a la carte* proposal outlined by John Major in his Leiden speech in which he dismissed the notion that a hard core of states or policies was in existence.

The furore over the "hard core" proposal of the Paper overshadowed its prescient analysis intended as a corrective to a set of

tendencies that were seen to be grounds for weakening links between the member states. The tendencies identified were: the inability of existing institutions to cope with the pace and extent of enlargement of the Union; differences between Member States fuelled by their differing levels of socio-economic development; the different perceptions of internal and external priorities; Europe's continuing economic difficulties,



most especially, its high-levels of unemployment; heightened nationalism; and the inability of national governments to cope with increasing demands made by their publics. However, of particular concern to the authors was the place of Germany in post-cold war Europe.

As a corrective to these challenges the Paper offered other proposals, which also act to delineate the subsequent realms of the debate. Questions of openness and democratisation of the institutions have long been a part of the reformists agenda for the European Union. The looming set of enlargements that the Union has accepted will now make institutional reform particularly acute. The Paper proposed to strengthen the institutions; the European Parliament to become the primary law making body of the Union; the Council to become a chamber of the states; and the Commission proving to be putative government. All these proposals were a restatement of the earlier Bitterlich report authored by Chancellor Kohl's foreign policy adviser.

The future strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and improving the capacity for the Union to act, has been an extensively articulated area of discussion. The Paper's proposal for a developed common defence capability, viewed as crucial in endowing the EU with an international identity of its own is now a common refrain. French Minister Alain Lamassoure, in particular, has raised the most thorny question regarding a common defence policy - implying that UK and French independent nuclear deterrents must be expected to contribute to such a policy.

The Paper's call for measures to ensure an enlargement to the east around the year 2000 was put in place with the pre-accession strategy agreed at the last European Council. Subsequent events in Chechnya have halted any development of the wide-ranging partnership with Russia urged by the authors. With the contours of the debate on the agenda for the IGC already forming, the Study group, composed of member state government representatives, first meeting in June (and reporting in December) appears almost belated.

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CSD Bulletin is produced in Autumn, Winter, and Summer.

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The Editorial Board for this issue was Bernard Rorke, Julian Kirby, John Keane and Bridget Cotter. Napoleon Abdulai and Patrick Burke also kindly contributed to its production.



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