

INCREASING CO-OPERATION AMONGST POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE ?

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Conor McGrath

President, Political Studies Association of Ireland

conor.p.mcgrath@gmail.com

CONTEXT

A meeting held in Halle, Germany, in November 2006 of political science associations in Europe was attended by representatives of 14 national associations as well as of the European Political Science Network (epsNet) and the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).¹ That meeting largely focused on briefings regarding the Bologna Process, the harmonisation of political science programmes, and European procedures for accreditation and quality assurance. However, some discussion took place around the general question of the future for co-operation amongst European political science associations. In particular, the need was identified to hold a separate meeting focused on the role of national associations – what do they currently undertake, which of their services/activities could be shared collectively, what problems do they face in expanding the range of their operations, what are they unable to do well individually? Would national associations be best served by entering into a permanent alliance in the form of a confederation? In practical terms, how could a confederation represent the discipline outwardly and how could it build relationships and member services inwardly?

During this conversation, a number of views were expressed and several suggestions proposed. Some participants saw a role for such a confederation in terms of representing European political science collectively in official European Union (EU) policy-making such as the Bologna Process, arguing that such long-term and EU-wide

initiatives involve substantial negotiation and that the interests of political science associations could usefully be co-ordinated through a formal confederation. There was in addition thought to be a possible advantage through collaboration in improving and increasing the benefits offered by each individual nation association to its members, although it was recognised that much of this sort of benefit can already be provided through epsNet and ECPR. What would a new confederation contribute in terms of a mission that would make it different from existing organisations?

Any future confederation would presumably need an organisational infrastructure – funding, secretarial/administrative support, a website, and an executive committee to manage it. One option mooted was that it could develop as a Standing Group within ECPR, holding an annual meeting in the fringes of the existing ECPR Joint Sessions. Equally, a similar form of arrangement may be possible within epsNet. Or it may be possible to apply for EU funding for a distinct confederation through the Seventh Programme framework. In any event, any formal confederation presupposes that national associations would be prepared to assume additional responsibility for establishing and maintaining the confederation.

As a starting point, it was decided to undertake a limited survey of national political science associations in Europe, as a way of both gathering some basic information about the work they currently carry out and generating some thoughts which could help launch a more detailed consideration of the possibility of an EU-wide confederation.

To this end, a short (16-question) survey was emailed to national political science associations in Europe in January 2007.² Responses were received from 15 associations:

- Czech Political Science Association (CSPV) <http://www.cspv.cz>
- Danish Political Science Association (DPSA) <http://www.dpsa.dk>
- Dutch Political Science Association (DPSA) <http://www.politicologie.nl>
- Finnish Political Science Association (FPSA) <http://www.helsinki.fi/jarj/vty/>

- French Political Science Association (AFSP) <http://www.afsp.msh-paris.fr/>
- German Political Science Association (DVPW) <http://www.dvpw.de>
- Italian Association of Political Science (SISP) <http://www.sisp.it>
- Lithuanian Political Science Association (LPA) <http://www.lpasoc.lt>
- Political Studies Association of Ireland (PSAI) <http://www.psai.ie>
- Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom (PSA) <http://www.psa.ac.uk>
- Romanian Society of Political Science (SRSP) <http://www.srsp.ro>
- Slovenian Political Science Association (SPOD) <http://guests.fdv.uni-lj.si/spod/>
- Spanish Association of Political Science and Administration (AECPA) <http://www.aecpa.es>
- Swedish Political Science Association (SWEPSA) <http://www.swepsa.org>
- Swiss Political Science Association (SVPW/ASSH) <http://www.sagw.ch/svpw/> and <http://www.assh.ch/assp/>

The survey questions may be grouped into three general themes – basic ‘demographic’ background on each association; the existing publications, conferences and other activities/member services which each association produces or engages in; and the scope of a possible future confederation of European political science associations. All unsourced quotations throughout this report are taken from the survey responses provided by the associations; in quotes from association responses, the original spelling and grammar have been retained, even where they included errors.

‘DEMOGRAPHIC’ DATA

The basic ‘demographic’ backgrounds of these 15 national political science associations reveal some significant variations. The Anglo-Saxon conception of politics as a discipline is reflected in the titles of the UK and Irish associations (‘political studies’ rather than ‘political science’). The oldest of the associations was the Finnish, established in 1935, and the youngest that in Romania, set up in 2000. Several were created in the post-WWII era – France (1949), UK (1950) and Germany (1951) – while five others were formed in the 1960s (the Netherlands, Denmark, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Switzerland). The

Swedish association arrived in 1970, while the Italian association was created in 1981 (to replace the Section of Political Science which had existed within the Italian Association of Political and Social Sciences since 1973), and the Irish group in 1982. More recently, the Lithuanian association began in 1991 and that in Spain in 1993. So 11 of the 15 bodies have come into being since in the period since 1960.

Membership levels also vary substantially. Two of the associations fall at one extreme – Lithuania with 70 members and Romania with 100 – while a cluster of nine associations have around 300-500 members (the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Ireland). Two groups are still larger – France with 600 members and Switzerland with over 700 – but clearly at the other extreme are the German association (1,532 members) and the UK association (1,600 members). Total membership across all 15 national associations is just under 8,000; for the sake of comparison, the total membership of the American Political Science Association is in excess of 15,000. The average membership figure across all 15 associations is 530; when the German and British groups are excluded the average of the other 13 falls to 370.

A number of models for membership categories and criteria are evident. In most cases, the bulk of members are individual members with perhaps some institutional or collective members also; this is reversed in the Danish association, which has five core collective members which themselves have around 350 employees (academics and PhD students) and only a few individual members. The Swedish association has a more balanced mixture of both institutional and individual members. All associations accept individual members and almost all accept student members (though the Romanian association is explicitly not open to students), some also have departmental or institutional members (France, Spain, Switzerland, the UK), a few have honorary or retired members, and one has a separate category of foreign members (France). Most associations have either no or only very loose membership criteria, welcoming anyone with an interest in politics – though the German association requires a university degree in the social sciences and at least one publication; the Czech group requires that members

are ‘active in political science and related disciplines as teachers, researchers or students’; and the Romanian association only accepts teaching and research staff in political science departments as members.

Funding levels also vary enormously. Here the extremes are represented by the Romanian association (with income/expenditure of only a few hundred Euro per year) and the UK association (which had estimated income of approximately 700,000 Euro and estimated expenditure of approximately 620,000 Euro in the 2006 financial year). It should be noted that roughly two-thirds of the UK PSA’s income is derived from its relationship with Blackwell Publishing which produces the association’s various journals which all have large international subscriber bases

No other association surveyed came close to the financial position of the British group.³ The French, Spanish, Swiss and German associations all had relatively large budgets (ranging from between 45,000 Euro and 110,000 Euro per annum), followed by the Dutch and Italian groups (at around 20-25,000 Euro). The Swedish, Irish and Danish associations are clustered together, with annual incomes of approximately 10,000 to 12,000 Euro. Finally, several national associations operate on budgets of about 2,000 to 4,000 Euro per year (Lithuania, Czech Republic and Finland).

Clearly, all the national associations rely heavily for their administration on the efforts of the members of their executive committee (by whatever term that goes in each case), who are generally university-based academics undertaking this role as part of their commitment to giving service to the profession. Setting that activity aside, professional staffing levels reveal a three-fold pattern⁴ – five associations have no direct staff support at all (the Dutch, Lithuanian, Czech, Romanian and Irish groups – though the Irish body does receive free access to a website manager at Taylor & Francis who loads updates onto the group’s site). Two associations (Italy and Spain) have assistance from voluntary staff, two and three people respectively. Finally, eight national groups have some degree of professional staff resourcing:

- the Swedish body has two part-time staff who each work a few hours per month on the group's website and journal;
- the Danish association similarly has a part-time (few hours per month) assistant providing administrative support;
- the Swiss association has a part-time secretary who is partly voluntary and partly remunerated who helps to manage membership administration;
- two professional staff are employed by the Spanish association (in addition to the three voluntary staff noted above);
- the Finnish association has three professional staff (a group secretary and the editor and sub-editor of its quarterly journal);
- the German group employs a full-time secretary general and two part-time assistants;
- the French association employs a full-time assistant responsible for financial and management issues, and a part-time assistant responsible for its website and public relations; and
- the British association employs two full-time and two part-time staff members.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES/SERVICES

The 15 national associations generally undertake a similar set of core activities – websites, publications, and conferences. Firstly, as listed above, all maintain a website, though the amount of material available on each varies enormously. Secondly, all produce publications of some sort:

- Czech Political Science Association: publishes the Political Science Review (*Politologická revue*) twice yearly, and is also involved in publication of *Politics in Central Europe*, the journal of the Central European Political Science Association (CESPA). It also publishes a book of papers presented at its tri-annual conference.
- Danish Political Science Association: does not itself publish an academic journal but does produce a semi-annual newsletter. In addition, as a member of the

Nordic Political Science Association (NOPSA) it is involved with the publication of NOPSA's journal (*Scandinavian Political Studies*).

- Dutch Political Science Association: publishes (through Palgrave) the quarterly journal *Acta Politica*, and is 'currently setting up a native language journal for both Dutch and Flemish political scientists about political developments in the lower countries' (*Res Publica*).
- Finnish Political Science Association: produces a quarterly academic journal (*Politiikka*).
- French Political Science Association: the French Political Science Review (*Revue française de science politique*) is its academic journal, produced six times a year.
- German Political Science Association: *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* is a quarterly journal, and the association also circulates a member newsletter (*DVPW – Rundbrief*) twice a year.
- Italian Association of Political Science: the Italian Review of Political Science (*Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*) was established in 1971 and is published three times a year. It has been the association's official journal since 2004, and all members receive a free subscription. In addition, a monthly bulletin (*Newsletter SISP*) is emailed to members, and a new 'professional journal' (*IPS – Italian Political Science*) is forthcoming and will be made available through the association's website.
- Lithuanian Political Science Association: produces the annual *Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook* in association with the Institute of International Relations and the Political Science department at Vilnius University. In addition, 'if the resources are available', collections of papers from conferences are sometimes published.
- Political Studies Association of Ireland: publishes *Irish Political Studies* as an academic journal. Beginning in 1986, *IPS* was originally an annual self-produced journal, but is now produced professionally by Taylor & Francis and in 2007 has moved to a quarterly basis – two issues each year contain general articles on Irish politics, one is a special themed issue, and another is an annual yearbook updating data on Irish politics. The PSAI also sends a monthly newsletter to its members

by email. Since 2006 it has begun publishing the papers at its conferences on its website. A number of books have also been published in association with the PSAI – including *Key Contributions on Irish Politics* (forthcoming, Routledge), *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (4th edition, 2004, Routledge), and a series of guides to Irish election results.

- Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom: The PSA (through Blackwell Publishers) produces a range of academic journals – *Politics* (which appears three times a year), *Political Studies* (quarterly), *Political Studies Review* (three times a year), and *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (quarterly). In addition, the association circulates a quarterly member newsletter (*PSA News*), an *Annual Directory* (listing all political scientists in the UK and Ireland by university and department), *Study Politics* (a guide to studying politics at university), and a *Media Register of Experts*. It also publishes its annual conference papers on its website.
- Romanian Society of Political Science: publishes the *Romanian Journal of Politics and Society* twice a year.
- Slovenian Political Science Association: publishes the *Bulletin of Slovenian Political Science Association*, and publishes its annual conference papers.
- Spanish Association of Political Science and Administration: publishes *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* as a semi-annual journal, and a *Members' Directory*.
- Swedish Political Science Association: although SWEPSA and the quarterly journal *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* are formally independent of each other, the association 'has a special section for information and debate published in this journal' and its members are able to subscribe to the journal at a reduced rate.
- Swiss Political Science Association: publishes the quarterly *Swiss Political Science Review* (which was launched in 1995 and is the only journal in the discipline which publishes articles in English, French, German and Italian), as well as a quarterly newsletter emailed to members, and a *Handbook of Swiss Politics*.

Thirdly, all 15 national associations hold a variety of conferences and meetings:

- Czech Political Science Association: holds a conference every third year.
- Danish Political Science Association: hosts an annual conference itself, and is also involved as a member of the Nordic Political Science Association in organising NOPSA conferences and workshops.
- Dutch Political Science Association: co-hosts an annual conference with the Flemish (Belgian) Political Science Association.
- Finnish Political Science Association: holds an annual conference.
- French Political Science Association: since its inception in 1949, this association has held over 300 Congresses, symposiums and roundtables. It also hosts an annual '*Salon des theses*', 'bringing together the PhD doctors in political science of the year and those still preparing their dissertation, with professors, researchers and potential employers. It presents the state of the discipline, job opportunities, available research funds, and aims at interesting the non academic world in hiring political scientists'.
- German Political Science Association: holds an international conference itself every three years, and co-hosts joint conferences with the Austrian and Swiss national associations every two to three years.
- Italian Association of Political Science: holds an annual conference at which Italian is the working language but 'panel work is on occasion in English and other foreign languages'. All the association's members can participate in the annual conference without paying any conference registration fee.
- Lithuanian Political Science Association: holds an annual conference.
- Political Studies Association of Ireland: holds an annual conference, an annual postgraduate conference, and occasional Heads of Department meetings.
- Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom: holds an annual conference, an annual graduate conference, and regular Heads of Department conferences.
- Romanian Society of Political Science: generally holds an annual conference.
- Slovenian Political Science Association: holds an annual conference at which the working language is Slovenian but there are some English-speaking panels also.

- Spanish Association of Political Science and Administration: holds a Congress every two years, an annual PhD Methodological Seminar, and a ‘Max Weber’ Political Analysis School with a variety of seminars and courses.
- Swedish Political Science Association: holds a yearly conference.
- Swiss Political Science Association: holds an annual Congress.

Finally, a number of the associations also engage in other activities outside this common set of core functions identified above. Prizes and awards are a common undertaking – the Spanish group presents annual awards for best conference paper, best book, best book chapter, best journal article and best PhD dissertation; the Italian association presents a biannual prize for the best political science book published by a member under 40 years of age, and an annual Carlo M. Santoro Prize for the best paper delivered at the annual conference by a young political scientist who does not hold a permanent academic position; the Lithuanian association has a best publication award; the Irish association has established a prize for the best PhD dissertation produced in an Irish university and a prize for the best book; and the UK association offers prizes for best book, book article published in *Political Studies*, outstanding teaching, best PhD thesis in political theory, best PhD thesis in comparative and international politics, best PhD thesis in elections, electoral systems and representation, lifetime achievement awards, an award recognising a younger scholar’s contribution through published work to the study of British politics, and a number of awards to politicians and journalists. Some of the associations have negotiated discounts or special offers for their members – members of the Finnish group can subscribe to *Scandinavian Political Studies* at a preferential rate; similarly, members of the Swedish association can subscribe to the journal *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* at a reduced rate; the UK association offers member discounts on conference and workshop fees and a 35% discount on books and journals from Blackwell Publishing and Polity Press.

Another activity which is undertaken by several associations is supporting various standing groups or specialist groups⁵ – the Swiss association has 12 standing groups (International Relations and Comparative Politics; European Studies; Security Politics;

Space and Politics; Public Politics; Political Behaviour; Political Theory; Gender and Politics; Social Politics; Political Economy; Methodology; and Federalism); the Swedish group has 8 sub-groups (International Politics; Public Administration; Comparative Politics; Political Theory; Gender Politics; EU Research; Constitutional Politics; and Politics of Environment and Sustainable Development) which hold their own meetings on an ad hoc basis; the Italian association has 10 Standing Groups which organise seminars, have their own websites and publish reports/newsletters (European Union; Quality of Democracy; Parliament, Representation and Legislative Process; Local Governments and the European ‘Space’; International Relations; Italian Political Parties’ Transformation – the Comparative Perspective; Public Opinion and Political Behaviour; Politics and Rationality; Regionalism and Federalism; and Social Movements and Political Participation); the Irish association has recently established seven Specialist Groups (Democratization, Conflict & Peace Studies; Diaspora Studies; European Studies; Interest Groups and Lobbying; International Relations and Area Studies; Political Theory; and Urban Politics); the French association has 11 sub-groups (Electoral Analysis; Gender and Politics; History and Political Science; Local Politics; Methods, Observations and Givens; Sociology and Politics; Public Politics; Changes in Social Movements; Political Parties and Organisations; European Studies; and International Studies); the German association maintains nine Sections and 34 Working Committees, most of which meet annually and each of which receive some funding and publication support from the association⁶; and the British association has a network of 43 Specialist Groups which organise their own meetings and publications⁷.

The French group hosts two ‘Observatories’ on its website to list academic posts available and funding opportunities and fellowships. The Czech Association states that it ‘was/is mostly understood as “roof”, but the majority of activities the members give at their home institutions (universities, research institutions). The Association is the middle for communication with the Central European Political Science Association and the International Political Science Association’. The Lithuanian group also notes its co-operation or co-ordination role with other ‘international and regional political science

associations'. The Finnish association hosts ad hoc seminars and discussion meetings. The UK association provides its members with media training workshops.

SCOPE OF A EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION

Asked in the survey about the difficulties they faced in expanding their work and activities, a number of issues were raised by several groups.⁸ The most common are to do with the availability of funding and professional staff – the French association's future growth is limited by 'Lack of funds, and more staff needed!'. 'The lack of money' is the main limiting factor facing the Romanian association, as are 'financial and other resources' for the Finnish group. Both issues are mentioned by the Lithuanian association – 'Lack of human resources, which could ensure the provision of Association's services on a more regular basis. Lack of human resources is closely interrelated with another difficulty – lack of financial resources' – and by the Dutch association: 'We are a small association, with no professional staff, and not much money. There will be bottlenecks as soon as we expand our activities'.

Another common difficulty relates to the time demands on academics running an association on a voluntary basis. The Swedish group notes, 'Limited time and funding for work. Most work is on voluntary basis and there is great competition for time also for our members'. According to the Irish association, 'Relying entirely on the voluntary efforts of our executive committee members with no staffing support does require us to be very focused on only those activities which have a direct and practical benefit to members. Last year, for instance, we resigned our collective membership in the International Political Science Association because it did not bring sufficient tangible services to PSAI members. That said, we do find it is still possible to be reasonably active on a low budget and no professional staff, but it does require a tremendous commitment on the part of our committee members'. The Czech association states that: 'There is no Professional Staff in the Association, we work for free. In the past, this situation led to the development, where the leadership limited the activities at the minimal basis (2 reviews in a year + congress and volume each 3 years. We are strongly limited also by the financial sources.

The membership fees are very low; from these sources we are not able to publish the review and each year we ask for help the Council of Scientific Societies at the Academy of Sciences/Czech Republic. We can not make the fees higher, because the position (and incomes) of political science/ists in Czech Republic is not comparable with such occupations as lawyers or medicine doctors. Some regular financial support could enable to engage at least small professional staff (at least one person responsible for webpages, communication and the review) that would be more responsible for its work’.

Even the largest and best-resourced of these 15 associations, though, is able to identify impediments to future development: the UK Political Studies Association notes that ‘collective organisations are unfashionable. UK government does not listen to academics’. The German association, however, notes that it grown constantly over recent decades and sees no obstacles to continuing growth; nor does the Italian group. The Spanish association is similarly positive: ‘Not too many [difficulties in expanding], given AECPA well extended Association e-mailing list, wide access to AECPA website, and regular information and news alert service for all AECPA members’.

One factor mentioned by several groups is perhaps less tangible than money or staffing, but no less significant: the need for a clear conception of the role of a national association. This issue is summarised in the response from the Lithuanian association: ‘Another problem is “identity crisis”, by which we mean the lack of vision and understanding of mission of the Association. The consensus and understanding of mission would allow concentration of efforts and resources for particular purposes and avoid “sketchy” activities’. Such an identity crisis is also experienced by the Danish Political Science Association which states that it ‘is seen as a scientific community; not as an organization that represents broader professional interests of political scientists or political science as a discipline. As appears, there would also be limited resources to do that’. In a similar vein, the Czech association commented that, ‘The biggest difficulty is connected with the situation in Political Science in Czech Republic. It develops well in regional centres (Brno, Pilsen, Olomouc), but these centres were till 2006 excluded from the decision making process in the Association located in Prague. At the congress in 2006

the Association was more decentralised. Nevertheless, the members are not very active in the Association, because they (naturally) prefer their university or research institute'. The Irish association notes that, 'While PSAI activities are well supported by our members, the Association's identity does present one challenge particularly in terms of growing our membership base: we tend to be seen as a group exclusively interested in Irish politics. In fact, our aim is to promote the study of politics in and of Ireland. The Association is interested in politics, not simply in Irish politics. It represents the totality of politics as it is taught and researched in Ireland. To this end, the Association has recently established a number of specialist groups representing a range of disciplinary concerns, but it remains true that too many potential members in Ireland who do not teach or research Irish politics do not yet see the PSAI as relevant to them'.

Two questions in the survey asked associations to identify which of their existing activities/services they might be willing to share with other associations across a confederation, and conversely in what ways other associations could assist them in developing their services and benefits to members. Responses received from each association are summarised below:

- Czech Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – 'As far as our Association serves as the "source or middle of communication", the most important issue seems to be the quick exchange of informations about conferences, grants, and other related activities in European/international political science environment'. *Possible Assistance from Others* – 'share of experiences'.
- Danish Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – '?? Open for suggestions'. *Possible Assistance from Others* – 'In its present form the Danish Political Science Association is able to communicate information from international bodies and associations to Danish political scientists and also to coordinate some activities'.
- Dutch Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – 'Clearly, we don't have many activities or services. In our annual meeting we already share work together with the Flemish Association. Furthermore, we don't have much to share to date'.

Possible Assistance from Others – ‘The DPSA will communicate with larger professional associations in order to know their policies and to learn from these policies’.

- Finnish Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – ‘Information sharing: common website or links to other national European Political Science Associations websites; a mailing list for national contact persons; disseminations of publications (journals, books); and possibly newsletters between associations. In addition, there could be more information sharing and co-ordination in post-graduate training. Focused research workshops are also one possible form of communication’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘Discounts in membership fees for member of other national associations; possibly right to participate in the meetings of other European national associations’.
- French Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – ‘organization of joint scientific demonstrations (sessions, congress ...)’.
- German Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – ‘We can offer a reduced fee for our conferences to all members of the other European Associations on a mutual basis. We can provide links to the homepages of the European Associations. Perhaps we could organize common conferences; at least on the level of our working committees’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘They could offer reduced fees for conferences to our members and provide links to our website’.
- Italian Association of Political Science: *Willing to Share* – ‘All information suited for building scientific and professional networks’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – No response.
- Lithuanian Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – ‘Networking, provision of information (contacts with political scientists and experts, availability of data about national politics and society, which is necessary for research purposes)’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘The following services and needs of Association’s members could be satisfied only in co-operation other

- associations: (1) networking; (2) provision of the information about the state of political science discipline in other countries (topics, events, publications, expertise); and (3) collegial guidance concerning the availability of data for comparative research purposes (help in translation)’.
- Political Studies Association of Ireland: *Willing to Share* – ‘We produce a detailed (about 100 page) monthly newsletter of conference/journal Calls for Papers, research funding, UK/Irish job vacancies, etc, which might be of use to all national associations. Could have discounted registration fees for our conferences for the members of other associations. Good series of links on our websites to political studies associations and journals, politics databases, etc. Certainly able to disseminate information from other associations to our members’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘We’d be very interested in trying to encourage cross-national research and publication collaboration, perhaps through specialist groups/working committees organising joint events. General networking, and enabling colleagues to identify others in other associations working in the same field. Sharing information about CFPs, conferences, jobs, research grants etc’.
 - Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom: *Willing to Share* – ‘Database. RAE responses. Other responses to government activity/plans’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘Joint memberships? Publicising events’.
 - Romanian Society of Political Science: *Willing to Share* – ‘academic and research activities mainly fund raising etc’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘First of all to provide some funds for our publication and for upgrading our infrastructure’.
 - Slovenian Political Science Association: No response to these questions.
 - Spanish Association of Political Science and Administration: *Willing to Share* – ‘Associations members directories. Associations publications (norms for contributions). Information dealing Associations Conferences and scientific meetings’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘They could help us providing us with information about their annual plan of activities, conferences and academic meetings, as well as sending us calls for other activities. At the same time, letting their members know about our Association academic activities’.

- Swedish Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – ‘Web page information/links can be shared. We also have some useful links on our web page to other relevant sites’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – ‘Linkages to each other’s information channels?’.
- Swiss Political Science Association: *Willing to Share* – ‘There should be particular emphasis on the concentration of teaching and degrees beyond common BA/MA titles’. *Possible Assistance from Others* – No response.

Another question asked which national and European public policy issues are of concern to each association. Responses here were generally similar. The Swedish group pointed to ‘Those related to political science education and research’. Similarly, the Spanish association mentioned ‘issues dealing Political Science degrees coordination (at a national and European levels), as well as competences and skills for PS graduated and professionals. Different experiences and good practice examples on PS degrees design’. The Irish association stated, ‘We have not always been as involved in public policy debates as we perhaps should have been, but that position is improving. We are currently working on issues around civic and political education in secondary schools, and on the assessment of university research quality. Bologna Process is of interest also’. The Romanian group stated: ‘In Romania and also for European level we are of concern of Ministry of Education and research’. The British body has a wide range of interests – ‘Teaching, teacher-training, graduate research training and funding, undergraduate numbers in politics, the use of ICT in teaching, the RAE process, Quality Assurance procedures’. The Lithuanian group stated that, ‘Conferences and other events organized by association always have a national focus and the topics of these events indicate the issues of concern. There is also a discussion within the Association concerning the necessity to participate in civic education and development of political competences of Lithuanian society’. Issues mentioned by the Italian group are: ‘the reform of the university system, and evaluation procedures. PS research funding. Relations with politics practitioners, policy analysts and professionals’. In a similar vein, the German association lists ‘tertiary education (funding, quality standards), the Bologna Process’,

while the French group takes an interest in ‘everything about public policies in the field of research and teaching of Political science in the different European countries ...’.

Another set of associations play no (or only a minimal) role in public policy discussions at the minute, including those in Denmark, the Netherlands (though it occasionally holds ‘public meetings about topical issues and concerns’) and the Czech Republic. The Finnish group noted ‘Science policy at the national level; possibly at the EU level as well, although this has very much depended on the activity of individuals, at least so far’. No responses were received to this question from the Swiss and Slovenian associations.

Each of the 15 national associations was asked what role it could see for a European confederation of political science associations in representing the discipline. Answers varied in their detail and evident prioritisation of the possible functions of such a collaboration:

- Czech Political Science Association: ‘The most important role would be perhaps related in the creation of basis for common activities and also lobbying. In this way the example of ECSA (European Community Studies Association) should be mentioned’.
- Danish Political Science Association: ‘I think this could be useful and will raise the question, whether the interests of the discipline as a whole ought to be a matter of concern for the Danish Political Science Association in the future’.
- Dutch Political Science Association: ‘The most important role is improvement of the European identity of political scientists in old and new member states of the European Union, as well as the strengthening of the international community beyond the EU framework’.
- Finnish Political Science Association: ‘Joint declarations by all European associations on the European university and science policies could be important in getting the views and interests of the discipline better represented at the European (and national) level’.

- French Political Science Association: ‘Defend the discipline at the European level, its autonomy (in relation with law or philosophy) and its utility, for as most social sciences it has not a good image compared to “hard” sciences seen as more “useful” (curing cancers etc). Harmonize political science programmes in European universities: what to teach, at which level, what requirements, defining common degrees, allowing for more mobility of the students from one country to another. Define together priorities for research in political science, European programmes. Think of teaching political science before university studies, in secondary schools already, in civic education courses and so on’.
- German Political Science Association: ‘A European Conference could contribute to coordinate the education of political scientists, exchange views and establish positions on problems facing the discipline in an integrating Europe’.
- Italian Association of Political Science: ‘It is here advised to name the network as the European Conference of National PS Associations. Indeed, it is unclear how and why PS associations of various kinds (academic and not academic; scientific and policy oriented; state and non-state; profit and non-profit; etc) would stay under the same umbrella conference. Under the above consideration, it is advised to give to the European Conference of National PS Associations the mission of managing the Europeanization of the university system, ie the formal aspects of the so called Bologna Process, in dialogue with the EU and national authorities. Under the current need for the EU harmonization of the national academic systems, a European Conference of National PS Associations will have a prominent and legitimating role of advise to government institutions’.
- Lithuanian Political Science Association: ‘In defining its role, [a European Conference of Political Science Associations] should not orient itself towards proliferation of organization and duplication of the activities of already existing organization (such as ECPR or epsNet, for example). Therefore the main question concerning the role of [a European confederation] is what are the aims which can not be achieved in other frameworks and initiatives’.
- Political Studies Association of Ireland: ‘While recognising that some of the larger associations may hold a view that information-sharing is too low an

ambition for a European confederation, the PSAI believes that it is nevertheless one of the key functions of such a collaboration. We are very happy to support a confederation in principle, but remain primarily interested in what practical benefits of PSAI membership in it would devolve down to our own members. Information-sharing is a tangible and visible benefit – though we suggest that it is not entirely without cost: we presume that the working language of a confederation would need to be English as that would be the single language most commonly shared across the membership, but that would impose extra burdens on the majority of associations which do not currently operate primarily through English, in terms of translating material to be shared throughout the confederation. If the combined membership base of the national associations which joined a confederation was sufficiently large to enable an attractive proposal to be made to a respected publishing house for a new journal and/or book series, that too would be a very practical benefit. We would certainly welcome increased contact between similar specialist groups/working committees across the national associations, and could well imagine that collaboration here in terms of conferences and publications might be particularly fruitful. As one of the associations which is perhaps around average in terms of size and funding and one moreover with no professional or voluntary staff support beyond the efforts of its executive committee, the PSAI is conscious that we are able to deliver only a finite product. Thus it is important to us that that product be as relevant and useful as possible to our members' daily work'.

- Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom: 'Dissemination of information/good practice amongst organisations'
- Romanian Society of Political Science: 'A huge role: for legitimacy first of all, and for introducing a normal relation based structure among political sciences faculties and departments in Romania'.
- Slovenian Political Science Association: No response to this question.
- Spanish Association of Political Science and Administration: 'It could be very useful in order to aggregate and spread information about Associations activities, services, and concerns. It could play a very interesting role dealing PS degrees

design (in terms of contents, subjects, academic and professional profiles, competences and skills)’.

- Swedish Political Science Association: ‘SWEPSA is a member of NOPSA, ECPR and IPSA. Our members participate in those events on a regular basis’.
- Swiss Political Science Association: ‘We should be able to develop minimum requirements/standards as to the support of nation states and the EU to political science departments. There should be the contours of a common strategy to defend the existence of independent political science departments in universities. There should be common positions and activities with regard to the standardization of BA/MA courses in Political Science and there should be strong activities to create transparency about these programs for students’.

Finally, some national associations provided a number of concluding comments about the shape of developing co-operation amongst themselves in the future.⁹ The Lithuanian association suggested that future co-operation ‘might be productive only if there is some financial support provided for those PSAs which do not have functioning infrastructures’. Several others raised the issue of the existing international associations. The Czech association noted that, ‘As member of CEPASA, where 8 national associations are active, we could share our experience with the difficulties and challenges connected with establishment and especially every-day life of such network/association’. The Finnish association suggested that, ‘Although there are already some European organisations (ECPR, epsNet), national associations provide a solid basis for the collaboration among political scientists. There seems to be a need for more collaboration among national associations in science policy, especially at the EU level. There are also other possible areas of information sharing, co-ordination and cooperation that are indicated above. However, it is important to consider the areas of collaboration carefully before creating heavy organizational structures’. A similar point is made by the Italian group – ‘Under the above argument, the European Conference should care about distinguishing its role and action from those of the existing Europe-wide PS associations. Reference is made here to two Europe scientific associations, ECPR and epsNET. The role of ECPR has been and will confidently be essential and proficient in bringing

together the PS research institutions of the European countries. Indeed, the departmental affiliation of the ECPR is perfectly suited for developing collaboration among researchers. Also the epsNET horizontal structure (ie individual and departmental affiliation) is apt to furthering collaboration among PS researchers in selected areas of scientific interest. The European Conference should care about setting up initiatives that risk to build duplication and unnecessary overlapping in the European PS community, especially at the time it faces the integration of new groups. Attention is also called on the fact that all national PS associations of Europe are either active or prospective member of IPSA. Therefore, the European Conference has to set down also a convenient policy towards IPSA in concert with the national representatives to IPSA and the IPSA governing body'. Finally, the Irish association states that: 'While the PSAI is very interested in furthering discussions leading to greater co-operation and collaboration between all the national political science associations of Europe, we should recognise that in some senses the national associations do also compete with each other. In our case, we are fortunate to have good personal relationship with the UK Political Studies Association, but the two bodies have yet to find many ways of building formal inter-group relations. While we have the advantages of a common language, geographic proximity, overlapping membership and common traditions, at the same time to some extent we compete for members and are so different in terms of resources that it has proved difficult in the past to enter into arrangements which are of equal mutual benefit. These issues will be magnified in a European confederation with even greater disparities of resourcing and without the advantage of a common language and history'.

CONCLUSION

As the Finnish association correctly points out, the European political science associations 'are very different from each other in their size and resources'. That has certainly emerged quite clearly from this exploratory survey. The forthcoming meetings in London and Ljubljana provide an opportunity for each national association to review this data from the others, and with that background information to begin to develop more detailed consideration of possible ways of proceeding. Clearly, it is important that the

discussions at London and Ljubljana are merely the prelude to broader discussion of the issues by the executive committees and memberships of each of the national bodies. Equally important, though, is that some firm timescale is fixed for those discussions with the aim of reaching actual decisions one way or another.

The most basic issue to be decided is whether there is a consensus that a European confederation would be useful – and in particular whether it would be sufficiently useful that each national group would be prepared to invest some time and money in making it work well. In order to determine this, it might be helpful if an attempt could be made at formulating a mission statement for a confederation, and to do so in such a way as to define a clear role for it which is distinct from those of ECPR and epsNet. Then, what organisational infrastructure and what activities/services follow from that mission? Presumably some form of permanent secretariat would be a minimum requirement to operate a website and email communications to and from the confederation. How might that be funded? Is there a realistic possibility of EU funding for such a venture? What resources would be available to a confederation is, for example, each national association contributed 5% of its annual income as a membership levy? Or 10%? Or should national groups contribute according to some formula based upon the size of their own membership figures? Presumably a confederation would require its own committee composed of representatives from each constituent national association, but might it also require a smaller group with executive responsibility for the daily functioning of the confederation and perhaps also a range of sub-committees to oversee various aspects of its operation. How would this sort of structure be populated and how might it operate?

Next, precisely how would our national association members benefit in visible and concrete terms from the existence of a European confederation? What activities would it engage in – what new channels of information would our members find themselves receiving? What events would be organised or facilitated by the confederation? Would it, for example, allow for greater contact and collaboration between relevant specialist groups/working committees of the national associations?; would it seek to establish its own journal/congress/book series?; would it host joint

meetings with other international associations?; would it develop distinctive prizes and awards?; would it be able to negotiate special rates and discounts on a range of products (books/journals/association memberships, etc) with external vendors based on the size of the confederation's membership? How would a confederation enable national associations to offer additional or improved benefits to their members? Alongside day-to-day activities, would a European confederation develop the necessary legitimacy to reasonably claim to represent the discipline collectively in its dealing with national, EU and international organisations and governments? If so, by what internal mechanisms would the confederation develop policies to defend and support the discipline?

This obviously represents a substantial agenda for both discussion and decision in coming months, but whatever the eventual outcome it can certainly provide the opportunity for a productive stock-taking by each national association.

Notes

1. The 14 national associations present at that meeting (which was hosted by the German Political Science Association at the University of Halle on 24 and 25 November 2006) were those from: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.
2. The questions asked in the survey were: Name of Association; Date Founded; Number of Members; Membership Levels and Membership Criteria; Please Attach Copy of the Association's Constitution and Most Recent Annual Report; Approximate Annual Income and Expenditure; Number of Professional and/or Voluntary Staff; Website Address; Details of Association's Publications; Details of Association's Conferences; Details of Other Association Activities/Member Services; Which Activities/Services Might You Be Willing to Share with Other Associations?; What Difficulties Do You Face in Expanding Your Association's Work?; How Could Other Associations Assist You in Developing the Services and Benefits Available to Your Members?; What Public Policy Issues (National and European) Are of Concern to Your Association?; What Role Could a European Conference of Political Science Associations Play in Representing the

Discipline?; Any Other Comments on the Future Development of Co-operation Among European Political Science Associations?

3. Approximate budgets were either disclosed in the survey responses or are publicly available on the associations' websites in 14 of the 15 cases, the exception being the Slovenian group.

4. Again, this analysis excludes the Slovenian association which responded to the survey by referring to its website, on which relevant information on staffing could not be found.

5. The Czech association established 20 Thematic Sections in 2006, but their titles could not be identified on the group's website.

6. The German association's nine Sections are on: Development Theory and Policy; International Politics; Politics and Economy; Political Sociology; Political Theory; Political Science and Political Education; German Government; State Teachings and Political Administration; Comparative Political Science. Its 34 Working Committees are: Democratisation; Empirical Methods; Film and Politics/Visual Politics; European Security Politics; History of Political Science; Action and Decision Theories; Integration Research; Local Politics; Migration Politics; Party Research; Politics, Culture and Language; Politics and History; Politics and Gender; Politics and Communication; Politics and Religion; Politics and Technology; Politics Field Analysis Internal Security; Political Psychology; Political Control; Social Movements; Environmental Policy/Global Change; Federations; Comparison of Eastern European Societies; Elections and Political Attitudes; Idealistic Bases of Foreign Policy; International Political Economy; Internet and Politics; Human Rights; Orders of Force; Political Counselling; Political Extremism; Social Politics in the European Multi-Level System; Condition and Politics; and Comparative Welfare State Research.

7. The 43 Specialist Groups within the UK Political Studies Association are: American Politics; Study of Anarchism; Art and Politics; British and Comparative Territorial Politics; British Idealism; British Liberal Political Studies; Citizenship and Democracy; Communist and Post Communist Politics; Comparative European Politics; Development Politics; Disability and Politics; Elections, Public Opinion and Parties; Ethnopolitics; French Politics and Policy; German Politics; Global Justice and Human Rights; Greek Politics; Interpretive Political Science; Irish Politics; Italian Politics; Labour Movements;

Local Politics; Marxism; Media and Politics; Parliaments and Legislatures; Participatory and Deliberative Democracy; Political Activism; Political Ideologies; Political Leadership; Political Marketing; Political Thought; Politics of Health; Politics of Representation; Politics of South Asia; Post-Structuralism and Radical Politics; Public Administration; Scandinavian Politics; Security and Intelligence; Sport and Politics; State Theory; Teaching and Learning; Urban Politics; and Women and Politics.

8. No responses to this question were received from the Swiss and Slovenian associations.

9. The associations which did not respond to this question were those in Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (though the topic was placed on the agenda of a meeting of the UK Political Studies Association's executive committee being held on 10 April 2007, and so feedback from that meeting will be available at our meeting in London on 21 May).