THE LISBON TREATY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE 27 MEMBER STATES

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Abstract

With the reform of the European Union more necessary than ever and the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty nearly completed, it has become of paramount importance in the study of European construction to analyze the approach of each member state to the reform document. Hence, the EU comprises not only states that have shown strong support for the Reform Treaty, but also other more skeptical nations, which have been reluctant to complete a swift ratification process. A number of opt-outs have diminished the already contested strength of the Treaty, mostly in terms of the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and with respect to the new decision making mechanisms envisaged within the document. Generally speaking, the aim of this reform endeavour includes, from the perspective of member states, more powers for both the European Parliament and national chambers, a closer connection between the Union and its citizens, as well as various opportunities even for smaller countries to play a central role in a number of positions within the EU. Attitudes, perspectives and divergent views are all taken into account through an approach focused on member states, either individually or grouped according to a set of pertinent criteria.

Keywords: Lisbon Treaty, reform, parliament, referendum, opt-out, ratification, institutions, member states, skepticism, democratic deficit, crisis.

Introduction

There is little doubt about the fact that the European Union is currently undergoing a profound process of institutional change, which has had its ups and downs over the last five years, in the context of a significant crisis of values within the EU[1]. One thing is for certain: the widely-debated democratic deficit, which is undermining the image of the EU both at an international level and in the eyes of its citizens, requires an elaborate set of measures from within the decision-making institutions of the Union. After the dramatic defeat of the Constitutional Treaty, whose goals and ambitions appeared to be too great for the bewildered political and social climate within the member states, new hope has arisen with the drafting and signing of the Reform Treaty, on December 13th 2007. Also baptized the Treaty of Lisbon, after the place it was signed, the legal document aims to bring significant amendments to both the Treaty of Maastricht, on European Union, and the Treaty of Rome, on the European Community.

[1] Nicolae Păun, *Europe's Crisis - A Crisis of Values?*, in Michael O'Neill, Nicolae Păun, *Europe's Constitutional Crisis: International Perspectives*, Edition Efes, Cluj-Napoca, 2007

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Although the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty is still pending, there is all likelihood that it will come into force either in the course of 2009 or, in the worst case scenario, prior to the spring of 2010, given that no fewer than 25 of the 27 member states have already completed their end of the bargain in the ratification process. Having said this, if one can still argue that the European Union lacks a democratic system of implementing reforms, let them be told that, according to the provisions of the Reform Treaty, if even one of the member states fails to ratify the document in accordance with its national constitutional procedures, the latter fails to come into force. This means that practically, the legal value of the document is no greater in the event that it is ratified by 26 member states or none - which makes the odyssey of the ratification process even more intriguing and the potential success of the Treaty even more resounding.[2]

Taking these facts into account, it has become necessary, on the eve of applying the Lisbon Treaty, to consider the importance of the reform document for each of the member states. In this regard, various factors need to be taken into account, including the economic, social and political dimensions that have shaped the national debates regarding the outcome of the Treaty and its relevance to the particular interests of those respective states in these fields. Such an endeavour will make it easier to understand, on the one hand, the difficulties that have arisen in the course of the ratification process and, on the other hand, the enthusiasm expressed in pro-European circles with regard to the beneficial reform process that the EU is about to undergo.

The analysis of these phenomena involves a detailed focus on the public opinion of each member state, related to the issue of institutional reform within the Union, as well as on the debates organized at a political level, ranging from skepticism and hostility to optimism and hope for a more effective EU.

Reform champions

It seems only fair that any debate regarding the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on EU members should start with the country under whose mandate the document was signed - and that country is Portugal. Indeed, it is under the Portuguese presidency of the EU, in the second semester of 2007, that the Treaty got the formal approval of all Heads of State or Government of the Union. The success can be at least partly attributed to Portuguese socialist Prime Minister José Sócrates, the host of the impressive ceremony, hosted by the Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon. Nevertheless, in reality, Portugal has benefitted more in terms of image

[2] *Treaty of Lisbon:* Article 6 (2)
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/cg00014.en07.pdf

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than with respect to institutional progress, thanks to the Treaty unofficially bearing the name of its capital.

Hence, it is a matter of prestige to associate, even at an informal level, the name of a significant reform document of the European Union with one's capital city - something that has been achieved with the contribution of the European media and according to the skilful previsions of the Portuguese PM. It must not be disregarded the support for Portugal coming directly from the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, a conational of Sócrates, in spite of their divergent political doctrines. At the time of the national parliamentary vote in Portugal - massively in favour of the document -, Barroso stated: "The Treaty of Lisbon would not have been possible without the commitment and leadership provided by the Government during the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union. I would also like to congratulate Parliament for the large majority for the Treaty, showing the unequivocal Portuguese support for the European project"[3] - a clear and intended to be permanent association between the Treaty and Portugal.

Another European nation which has earned its right to fall into the category of reform champion is undoubtedly Hungary, as it was the first member state to ratify the document in parliament, in December 2007. Subsequently, the process involves the deposition of ratification instruments with the Italian government, which Hungary accomplished on the 6th of February 2008.[4] One could eventually wonder what the rush was. Again, it is a matter of prestige, the one which comes along with emerging as champion of European reforms, in a European Union that is facing more and more threats from extremism and skepticism towards any attempt to modernize its institutional framework. In this regard, the Hungarian government, whose internal popularity had been shaken by social unrest, was desperate for a feat of popularity at a European scale and regained part of its confidence after some positive feedback in the European media following the ratification.

The Original Six

It is only logical to study the effects of the Lisbon Treaty on the six nations which have given rise to the plethora of accomplishments that we now refer to as the European Union. For a better understanding of what the Treaty might change with regard to the amplitude of the voices of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg within the European Union, one has to consider certain provisions of the Reform Treaty. Moreover, two

[3] *Lisbon Treaty gets Portugal's nod of approval***,** Euractiv, 22nd October 2009, http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/lisbon-treaty-gets-portugal-nod-approval/article-171881

[4] *Hungary First to Ratify EU Treaty,* Deutsche Welle, 22nd October 2010, http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3010107,00.html

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of these nations, the French and the Dutch, owed the legal document a swift ratification process, the more because they have remained in the public's eye as the sole responsible for the bitter failure of the Constitutional Treaty, back in the summer of 2005, with the failed referenda.[5] Moreover, Germany had held the Presidency of the EU in the semester prior to the signing of the Reform Treaty - under an Angela Merkel clearly persuaded to add weight to the Berlin Declaration adopted on the 25th of March 2007[6], which pledged to have the new treaty in place before the Parliamentary elections in 2009 (which proved to be too ambitious an objective). It was only after the German Constitutional Court gave its assent to the Treaty that President Hörst Kohler agreed to sign the document[7], given the already known controversy as to whether European treaties might interfere with the sovereignty of the German federal state.

All in all, it is the original six members of the European Community that are more likely to obtain benefits from the new institutional configuration depicted in the Lisbon Treaty, such as the idea of having a European Council President - an office for which several names emerging from these countries have already been put forward. For instance, Luxembourg PM Jean-Claude Juncker[8] or Dutch PM Jan Peter Balkenende[9] have been nominated as potential future heads of the Council, a position that, while mostly administrative, will provide the President with significant representation powers during his or her two and a half year term.

Another advantage for the six founders of the Community is the gain of prominence conferred by the Lisbon Treaty to the European Central Bank, which is about to receive the status of European institution, while the euro will be clearly defined as the official currency of the EU. With the ECB conveniently placed in Frankfurt and led by Jean-Claude Trichet of France, the level of influence of the Six over the future of the Eurozone is more at hand than ever before - and this may well prove to be decisive in a time of economic downturn. Last but not least, the founding members of the European Communities will witness a reconfiguration of the number of seats they get in the European Parliament, once the Lisbon Treaty has been set in place. Hence, from 296 representatives at present, the six states will benefit from one extra place, though the maximum limit of MPs, traditionally held by Germany with 99, will

[5] Stéphane Leclerc, *Les Institutions de l'Union européenne*, 2e édition, Gualino éditeur, Paris, 2007, p.46-47
[6] *Text of the Berlin Declaration*, BBC News, 25th March 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6491487.stm
[7] *Buzek Welcomes German Ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon*, EP Press Service, 28th September 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/010-61281-271-09-40-901-20090928IPR61280-28-09-2009-2009-false/default_ro.htm
[8] *Juncker, favori pour présider le Conseil européen*, Le Figaro, 6th May 2008, http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2008/05/06/01003-20080506ARTFIG00005-juncker-favori-pour-presider-le-conseil-europeen.php.
[9] *Dutch premier now likely candidate for presidency of European Council*, The Irish Times, 18th September 2009, http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2009/0918/1224254802581.html

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decrease to 96, while the lowest limit, shared by Luxembourg, Cyprus, Estonia and Malta, will be of 6 MPs.[10]

Skeptics

Some of the member states that fall into this category come as no surprise, if we refer to the United Kingdom and, to some extent, Ireland. However, the new configuration of the European Union brings forward two other states which have taken action against the reform process, for various reasons: Poland and the Czech Republic.

Given the fact that Ireland is the state that was on the verge of bringing to a halt the entire reform process, it becomes only natural to start with presenting the Irish people's view on the Treaty of Lisbon. First of all, from a legal perspective, Ireland is, at present, the only member state compelled by national law to hold referenda for the approval of EU treaties. Thus, in a déjà vu feeling of an event already experienced in 2004, the voters rejected the document on the 12th of June 2008, despite being told to do otherwise by Taoiseach Brian Cowen and nearly all national parties. The reasons behind this unexpected blow to the institutional progress of the Union are all too familiar: the anxiety over losing even more national sovereignty, the fear of no longer being allowed to appoint a commissioner due to the expected decrease in their number, as well as more punctual matters, regarding abortion, taxation and military neutrality. In fact, surveys conducted by the Eurobarometer concluded that the main reason for the No vote was none other than poor communication as to the nature and provisions of the treaty.[11] It wasn't until Ireland was guaranteed that its interests in the abovementioned fields would be respected and that the size of the European Commission would not be reduced, as previously agreed, that a second referendum was held, on the 2nd of October 2009, resulting in the massive approval of the Treaty.[12]

As far as the UK is concerned, opt-outs are far from being new in the nation's attitude towards the European Union[13], despite a transparent manner of informing the people on the provisions and effects of the legal document conducted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.[14] Hence, Britain has opted to become exempt from the legal provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which, though no longer integrated into the

[10] Stéphane Leclerc, *Les Institutions de l'Union européenne*, 2e édition, Gualino éditeur, Paris, 2007, p.129
[11] *Ireland rejects EU reform treaty*, BBC News, 13th June 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7453560.stm
[12] *Ireland says "Yes" to Lisbon Treaty,* Herald Scotland, 3rd October 2009, http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/politics/ireland-says-yes-to-lisbon-treaty-1.923771
[13] Simon Bulmer, Christian Lequesne, *The Member States of the European Union*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p.137-138
[14] *Lisbon Treaty,* Foreign and Commonwealth Office, http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/institutions/britain-in-the-european-union/eu-lisbon-treaty1

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text of the Reform Treaty, is nonetheless made legally binding by it.[15] The reasons behind this decision are fairly complex, but it has to be pointed out that from a legal perspective, the system of Common Law, which characterizes the juridical configuration in the UK, is more or less conflicting with a human rights' charter that would take precedence over the national legal provisions in this regard and, consequently, it would undermine the legal sovereignty of the British courts of justice. Furthermore, the United Kingdom, along with Ireland, has also expressed its right to opt-out in the matter of cooperation in police and justice affairs, in one particular aspect: the two nations will not accept the qualified majority vote to rule this sensitive domain, keeping unanimity in the Council as the general legislative procedure for taking decisions. This measure comes as a logical complement of the refusal to implement the Charter of Fundamental Rights, aiming to protect the Common Law system as much as possible from external interference.[16]

The debate on Poland's controversial role in the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty springs not only from President Lech Kaczynski's skeptical attitude towards the reform process, but also from various interferences of the Polish government in the negotiations of the final form of the Treaty. For example, not long before the signing of the Treaty, a compromise was reached to ensure the support of Poland, in terms of qualified majority voting. This is because from 2014 onwards, a new rule of qualified majority voting will apply within the Council of Ministers, one that requires the support of 55% of member states and 65% of their population in order to approve a legislative document.[17] In fact, despite the three-year transition period extended after that date, the Polish government obtained a replica of the Ioannina Compromise from 1994, in order to enable smaller member states to form coalitions and obtain the reexamination of decisions that are unsatisfactory to them.[18]

This has been a major success of Polish diplomacy, ensuring that the fear over being discriminated against in the Council in crucial matters such as agriculture no longer applies, the more because the Nice Treaty undoubtedly provides Poland with disproportional powers and it would be desirable for Warsaw to see the latter remain into force as long as possible. It is for this precise reason that President Kaczynski's supportive attitude towards the Irish *No* was so prominently exhibited, on the eve of France taking over the Presidency of the Council from Slovenia, in July 2008. Moreover, it has to be noted that Poland has opted out from accepting the legally binding nature of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, following the ultraconservative policy of Jaroslav Kaczynski's previous government,

[15] Armel Pécheul, *Le Traité de Lisbonne - La Constitution malgré nous?*, Éditions Cujas, Paris, 2008, p.101-102
[16] *Q&A: The Lisbon Treaty*, BBC News, 3rd October 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6901353.stm
[17] *Treaty of Lisbon*, Art. 9C
[18] Jean-Luc Sauron, *Comprendre le Traité de Lisbonne*, Gualino éditeur, Paris, 2008, p.44-45

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but with opposition from internal NGO's and ombudsman. In fact, the arguments invoked by the Polish government have been in strong connection with the Kaczynski brothers' right-wing doctrines, including the fear that the Treaty might corrupt the moral principles of national law, as in the matter of same-sex couples, going so far as to say that the Charter may open the way for German citizens to resettle in Poland and have territorial claims there.[19]

Bearing all these in mind, it is easier to comprehend the reasons behind the Polish President's refuse to consider signing the ratification instrument of the Treaty after the negative result in the Irish referendum. Nevertheless, following the approval of the document in Ireland, Kaczynski was left with little choice but to put his signature on the Treaty of Lisbon and make Poland the 25th member state to have ratified the reform document, in a solemn ceremony held on the 10th of October 2009, in the presence of EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso and EU Parliament President Jerzy Buzek.[20]

Having overcome the obstacles already presented, at this point, the Lisbon Treaty has two more steps until it can finally come into force, of which one is more or less considered to be formal - the Irish legislative procedures - while the other is controversial, to say the least. With Europe shaken by the negative vote in the Irish referendum on the Treaty, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek admitted in the Brussels summit held in June 2008 that constitutional challenges might prevent his country from ratifying the document, following two requests submitted by the senate to the constitutional court. At present, the court is expected to deliver the verdict on the 27th of October, though the entire procedure seems to be nothing more than a means of stalling, since the initial decision of the constitutional court dismissed any conflicts with the Czech Constitution.

The mechanism envisaged by Czech President Václav Claus involves delaying the ratification of the Treaty by means of decisions pending in the constitutional court until a potential victory of the Conservative Party in Britain brings the Reform Treaty to a referendum in this country, as Tory leader David Cameron has pledged[21]. This attempt, along with Claus' demand for an opt-out regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights, in order to prevent restitution of property to Germans in the Sudetenland region, has caused much irritation amongst European leaders and especially the Swedish Presidency of the Council, whose hopes of witnessing the Treaty coming into force during its mandate seems uncertain. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic's head of state has recently admitted to not being willing to

[19] *EU-Poland: Opt-out Protocol to the Charter of Fundamental Rights,* Statewatch News, 1st January 2008, http://www.statewatch.org/news/2008/jan/01eu-poland.htm

[20] *Poland ratifies Lisbon Treaty as Czech cloud hangs overhead*, EU Observer, 10th October 2009, http://euobserver.com/18/28809

[21] *Czech Republic 'planning to delay signing Lisbon treaty'*, Times Online, 21st September 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article6841622.ece#

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put a stop to the reform process of the European Union, possibly due to the tremendous pressure from its European homologues.[22]

Smaller member states

First and foremost, from the viewpoint of the smaller member states, the Lisbon Treaty should come as a step forward in the affirmation of a powerful voice within EU institutions by all its members. Thus, the merger of the three pillars originally meant to form the European Union and the attribution of legal personality to the Union as a whole constitute advantages to the smaller members, the more because their voice on the stage of international relations would not normally be prominent. On the contrary, with better international representation achieved by the EU, also due to the creation of the CFSP High Representative office, there is new impetus for every member state as to impose at least part of its international interests on the European agenda. Also, with the rule of unanimity still in place in the field of foreign relations, it is sure that the EU will not engage in endeavours that harm the interest of any of its members at an international level.[23]

Moreover, the increase in power of the European Parliament and of the national legislative bodies provides smaller member states with more likelihood of making their voices and those of their citizens heard within the EU. It must not be forgotten that the same Treaty comprises the right of EU citizens to sign a petition which is thereafter submitted to the Commission, provided it is signed by at least one million of them.[24] Hence, it will not come as a surprise if small-sized neighbours join their forces in order to uphold their interests by means of this newly-created legal instrument.

When it comes to the voting procedure within the Council, smaller member states are once more favoured, at least to some extent, by the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, as there will be no more voting weights in the method of qualified majority, henceforth called ordinary legislative procedure. Instead, qualified majority can be attained if at least 55% of members and 65% of citizens are represented (by means of their governments) for the approval of a certain legislative act.[25] While the latter proportion does not favour small member states, the former clearly does so and therefore increases the importance of the votes cast by these states.

If we consider the number of seats allocated in the European Parliament by the Treaty of Lisbon to these nations, it is easily noticeable that not even one of their allocations has been

[22] *Klaus lasă să se înțeleagă că va semna Tratatul de la Lisabona*, Realitatea TV, 17th October 2009, http://www.realitatea.net/klaus-lasa-sa-se-inteleaga-ca-va-semna-tratatul-de-la-lisabona_643076.html
[23] Armel Pécheul, *Le Traité de Lisbonne - La Constitution malgré nous?*, Éditions Cujas, Paris, 2008, p.29-30
[24] *Treaty of Lisbon*, Art. 8B
[25] Étienne de Poncins, *Le traité de Lisbonne en 27 clés*, Éditions Lignes de Repères, Paris, 2008, p.192

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revised *à la baisse*. In fact, if the number of MPs per each of them has not remained the same as it is at present, then it has increased, as in the case of Malta, Slovenia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Austria or Sweden.

Medium-sized and larger states

There remain few states that have not yet been covered by this paper, such as Spain, Greece and Romania, whose voices related to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty should clearly be analyzed at this time. The general trend in the public opinion in these states is clearly pro-European, the same views being reflected in their respective national parliaments. The evidence for this statement springs from the unequivocal results of the votes cast in favour of the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon. In fact, Romania has been one of the first member states to ratify the reform document in parliament, on the 4th of February 2008, with a striking majority, where only one vote stood against the treaty.[26] In fact, there have been no significant voices advocating a rejection of the legislative act in public debates. Romanian president Traian Băsescu made an important statement following the European Summer Council in Brussels, in 2008, urging all member states not to delay the ratification process, in spite of the negative vote of the Irish nation. Further key points emphasized by the Romanian head of state include the need for the EU to open its doors to the West Balkans, as well as to Moldova, which could ultimately lead to improved access of Moldavian citizens to the single market.[27] Nevertheless, from an institutional perspective, it is unlikely that Romania will be among the favourites for a key office within the Commission, while the number of Romanian MPs at Strasbourg remains stuck to 33, according to the Lisbon Treaty.[28]

As far as Spain is concerned, the national consensus reached on the approval of the Reform Treaty triggered a clear ratification in Parliament, though it was not done in a rush, as Spain was only the 23rd EU member to complete the process. And it would have taken even longer had it not been for Spanish PM Zapatero and Foreign Affairs Minister Moratinos who urged parliament to submit the document for approval in a more expeditious manner. The fear of the Spanish government was not to be subjected to criticism from the part of the European public opinion for slowing down the ratification process. Meanwhile, Zapatero told public radio on June 19th 2008, regarding the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland, that "What cannot happen is that Ireland... can stop a project that is so necessary to advance European

[26] *Parlamentul a ratificat Tratatul de la Lisabona*, Bank News, 5th February 2008, http://www.banknews.ro/stire/15358_parlamentul_a_ratificat_tratatul_de_la_lisabona.html#
[27] *Romania president: All EU states should ratify the Lisbon Treaty before the European elections in 2009,* HotNews, 20th June 2008, http://english.hotnews.ro/stiri-regional_europe-3319648-romania-president-all-states-should-ratify-the-lisbon-treaty-before-the-european-elections-2009.htm
[28] Jean-Luc Sauron, *Comprendre le Traité de Lisbonne*, Gualino éditeur, Paris, 2008, p.45

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integration," adding that Brussels should act "so that it is Ireland that has the doubt and the problem and not the EU. Ireland will not stop Europe."[29] In terms of benefits for the Spanish nation, it has to be noted that the number of seats in the European Parliament allocated to Spain increases by no fewer than four, according to the Treaty of Lisbon, being the state with the highest benefit in this regard. On the other hand, the prospects for Spain to inherit the position of High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy have seriously diminished since Javier Solana announced he would not be seeking to obtain it.[30]

On the day the Lisbon Treaty was signed, Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis expressed his pro-European view with a simple formula: "This development reinforces European institutions, and makes the European Union more capable to respond more effectively to new challenges." He equally emphasized the need to ratify the document as soon as possible, in order for Greece to continue along the path of ever closer integration, an idea supported in Greece at the time by most political parties. Hence, the vote in Parliament was fairly self-explanatory: 250 votes to 42 in favour of the Reform Treaty and of continuance in the development of Greece with the support of European policies.[31]

Conclusions

By analyzing the particularities of the Lisbon Treaty, it becomes obvious that every single institutional change, whether it affects the supranational or the intergovernmental dimension of the European Union, has a special meaning to each member state. One thing is obvious though: the Reform Treaty brings new momentum to EU members, by solving numerous problems regarding the way the European Union's policies, institutions and decision making mechanisms work in the context of the enlarged Union. Despite the fact that it may be considered weaker than the rejected Constitutional Treaty, the newer document fulfils the major task of reforming the core of the Community, while providing it with the status and means it requires for further integration. It is not to be forgotten that European citizens have righteously been complaining about the democratic deficit within the EU, which is why extra popular support is needed to ensure the legitimacy of the Union at a time when the need for cohesion and sustained development has become greater than ever. While it may not solve all the situations that need to be dealt with in terms of community reform, the Treaty of Lisbon simplifies decision making procedures and opens the way for new waves of enlargement, at

[29] *Spain Ratifies Lisbon Treaty*, The Brussels Journal, 15th July 2008, http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/3414
[30] *EU's Solana to step down*, Radio Nederland Wereldomroep, 5th July 2009, http://www.rnw.nl/ar/node/10170
[31] *Greek Parliament ratifies Lisbon Treaty,* Ana Greece, 11th June 2008, http://www.ana.gr/anaweb/user/showplain?maindoc=6528899&maindocimg=6500835&service=6

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least in the long run.[32] It is certain that there is no member state that could claim that it would lose more than it would gain following the coming into force of the Institutional Treaty. However, an improved sense of balance among the voices of the member states was clearly the intention of its creators, and this may just lead to the accomplishment of what perhaps is the ultimate goal of the EU, to achieve political union. Having said this, the upcoming moment when the final ratification dossier is deposited at the Italian Government is likely to be remembered as a turning point in European history and we, as European citizens, may just be witnessing history in the making.

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[32] Étienne de Poncins, *Le traité de Lisbonne en 27 clés*, Éditions Lignes de Repères, Paris, 2008, p.117-118

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