

Institution: Aston University
Unit of Assessment: 27 Area Studies
Title of case study: The Influence of Religious Lobbies in the Construction of the European Union
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research carried out at Aston University has unveiled how religious lobbies have contributed to the construction of the European Union from 1950 until today. This research has demonstrated the existence and nature of long-term relations between clergy, politicians and EU officials and has assessed the religious mobilisation in the construction of the European Union. The research has led to the following impacts: improving understanding and raising awareness of the importance of religious organisations to the European Commission; influencing, through the provision of recommendations, the strategies adopted by religious organisations when dealing with the European institutions; and enhancing public understanding on issues concerning 'religion' and 'faith' in the European Union.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>On its establishment in the 1950s, the European Community placed religion outside its areas of expertise while the development of a strong economic and political Europe was paralleled by diminishing religious authority across the region. The process of secularisation and of a continent characterised by 'believing without belonging' have been the main trends for large parts of the European population.</p> <p>The research was supported by an ESRC project on 'The Politics of Religious Lobbies in the European Union' (see s3 for more details) which was carried out by Dr Lucian Leustean, Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, at the Aston Centre for Europe, Aston University, Birmingham, where he has been employed since 2007.</p> <p>Through a comparative analysis of religious communities in Brussels and Strasbourg, the project addressed the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do (trans)national religious communities approach European institutions? 2. What are the rationale and the mechanisms of religious interest representation? 3. How are religious values transposed into political strategies? 4. And, how has the construction of the European Union been influenced by religious communities? <p>This project challenged the predominant perception that religious communities have had little impact on the process of European integration. It investigated the role of religious communities in the European Union by focusing on relations between religious policy practitioners and EU officials from the Second World War until today. Drawing on a wide range of archival sources and interviews with current and former EU officials, it provided the following findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Despite the widespread perception that religious issues have been absent from the process of European integration, this project has demonstrated prolonged contact between religious policy practitioners, politicians and EU officials from the 1950 Schuman Declaration until today (s3.1, s3.2, s3.3 and s3.6). 2. It proposed four types of relations between European institutions and 'churches, religions and communities of conviction', namely public-private (1950-82), experimental (1982-90), pro-active (1990-2007), and institutionalised (2007-today) (s3.6). 3. Each type reflected the increasing role of the European Commission in engaging in contact with religious and convictional groups (s3.5 and s3.6). 4. The project revealed that the ecumenical movement of the interwar period led to the first transnational reflection group composed of churchmen and politicians advising churches on the

Impact case study (REF3b)

process of European integration. This group lasted from 1950 until 1974. The Roman Catholic Church opened the first religious representation at the Council of Europe in 1956 and an office in Brussels in 1963 (s3.1, s3.2, s3.5 and s3.6).

5. The project identified 120 religious/convictional groups in dialogue with the European Commission from the Schuman Plan until today (s3.3 and s3.6).
6. The project identified 82 religious and convictional offices in Brussels and Strasbourg, most of whom have been established after President Jacques Delors of the European Commission launched a public debate on the 'heart and soul' of Europe in the early 1990s (s3.5 and s3.6).
7. For the first time in the history of the *acquis communautaire*, Article 17 in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty institutionalises 'an open, transparent and regular dialogue' with 'churches, religions and communities of conviction'. Religious and convictional issues remain under the jurisdiction of EU national member states; however, the increasing number of religious groups in dialogue with European institutions demonstrates the significance of religious/convictional issues in shaping the social and political dimension of the European Union (s3.5 and s3.6).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Lucian Leustean, 'Roman Catholicism, Diplomacy and the European Communities, 1958-64', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 2013, 15 (1), pp. 53-77 (published by MIT Press for the Harvard Project on Cold War Studies)
2. Lucian Leustean, 'The Ecumenical Movement and the Schuman Plan, 1950-54', *Journal of Church and State*, 2011, 53 (3), pp. 442-71 (published by the Oxford University Press for the M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University)
3. Lucian Leustean, 'Representing Religion in the European Union. A Typology of Actors', *Politics, Religion and Ideology*, 2011, 12 (3), pp. 295-315 (published by Routledge)
4. Lucian Leustean (ed.), 'Transatlantic Representations of Religion', *Politics, Religion and Ideology*, 2011, 12 (3), pp. 233-354 (published by Routledge)
5. Lucian Leustean and John Madeley (eds.), *Religion, Politics and Law in the European Union*, Routledge, 2010
6. Lucian Leustean (ed.), *Representing Religion in the European Union: Does God Matter?*, Routledge Studies on Religion and Politics, 2012

ESRC grant RES-000-22-382 awarded to Dr Lucian Leustean

Title: 'The Politics of Religious Lobbies in the European Union'

Value: £70,622; Period: January 2010 to June 2011

See <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-000-22-3821/read> for outputs and <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/centres-institutes/aston-centre-europe/projects-grants/religion-eu/> for a summary of findings

Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 are all published in international peer-reviewed journals. Items 5 and 6 are published by a recognised quality academic press. The research was carried out using an ESRC grant. Copies of all publications are available on request.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

This research has impacted on religious/convictional organisations in dialogue with European institutions at both national and supranational levels by raising awareness and understanding of the role of 'religion' and 'faith' as follows:

4.1 Religious Organisations in the European Union

The project led to Dr Leustean organising a two day international practitioner conference at the Aston Centre for Europe (November 2010) which examined religious representations in the

European Union and the United States (s5.1). It brought together sixty-eight participants representing both religious policy practitioners and academics from eleven countries (Britain, France, the US; Belgium; Germany; Ireland; Netherlands; Sweden; Switzerland; Singapore; Canada). The debates of the Aston conference were circulated by participants who favourably commented on the importance of inter-religious dialogue in the EU. They included a former director of the Quaker Council for European Affairs in Brussels who wrote a detailed report on the Aston Conference and circulated it to the Quaker Council for European Affairs, Faith in Europe - the Churches' European Relations Network and the Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust (s5.2 and s5.7).

4.2 Religious/Convictional Organisations in Dialogue with European Institutions in Brussels

The project brought together religious and convictional actors to reflect upon their impact of dialogue with European institutions. The Aston conference (2010) led to the publication of an edited book on religious representation in the European Union which includes a section with five chapters written by religious practitioners working in Brussels (s3.2, s5.5 and s5.8). These policy makers represent all categories of religious/convictional groups in dialogue with European institutions, namely the Roman Catholic Church (the Jesuit European Office); national churches (the Church of England Representative to the European Union); transnational church networks (the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches); religions (European Muslim Network); and communities of conviction (the European Humanist Federation).

In September 2011 Dr Leustean gave an invited talk at the European Commission in Brussels on 'The Representation of Religious Communities at the EU Level' to thirty-five representatives of religious/convictional communities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. The event was organised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement and focused on the social impact of religious communities in the European Union.

A report on the findings of the ESRC project on religious representation in the European Union was circulated (October 2011) to all religious and convictional groups in Brussels representing 'churches, religions and communities of conviction' in dialogue with European institutions (Catholic; Protestant; Anglican; Orthodox; Humanists; Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist organisations) (s5.7). The report offered the first historical overview of the origins of religious dialogue in the EU and was welcomed by a wide range of religious groups who wrote their view of the findings to Dr Leustean:

- a. *I found it most interesting. It is a very clear summary on a subject which, to my knowledge, had not been researched before. I was surprised to learn that you identified as many as 120 religious/convictional groups in dialogue with the European Commission. (The Order of Malta) (s5.7)*
- b. *Thank you for this which I will circulate to WPCT membership for their interest. A major project it was indeed and a lot of - good - work! Congratulations on the very professional way you pulled it off. (Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust) (s5.7)*
- c. *Many thanks for this and I will indeed pass it on to colleagues. (The Jesuit European Office) (s5.7)*
- d. *I paid particular attention to 3 and 4 in the summary because I have some responsibility as the lead Bishop for the Bishops' Europe Panel. I couldn't agree more that the photo opportunity occasions in Brussels really do not amount to very much other than a photo opportunity/media box ticking. This is not the dialogue called for by the Lisbon Treaty. I have said this on two occasions and will repeat it until it is heard. (Church of England) (s5.7)*

4.3 European Institutions

In November 2011 the Bureau of European Policy Advisors of the European Commission which coordinates religious dialogue in the framework of Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty welcomed the findings of this research. The advisor on religious issues to the President of the European

Impact case study (REF3b)

Commission wrote to Dr Leustean:

- a. *Many thanks for having shared the findings of your study [...] Your study is most valuable for our work and I will circulate it inside our House.* (s5.6)

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the EU invited Dr Leustean to have a book launch at the European Parliament (February 2013). The event was hosted by the Vice-President of the European Parliament and brought together sixty-four EU civil servants and religious policy practitioners including the present Advisor on Religious Dialogue to the President of the European Commission (s5.6).

4.4 Public awareness

Dr Leustean wrote commissioned commentaries on the research for *The European Voice*, an EU affairs weekly newspaper (the Economist Group), February 2012 (distributed to all participants in the annual *Fair on EU Studies* in Brussels) (s5.3) and *Britain in 2012*, the ESRC's annual newsstand magazine, December 2011 (s5.4). He was interviewed and quoted in *The New York Times*, 18 June 2013 and *The International Herald Tribune*, 19 June 2013 (s5.6).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. The website of the conference organised by Dr Leustean at Aston Centre for Europe which includes a list of paper presenters and chairs from both academia and public policy from both sides of the Atlantic: <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/centres-institutes/aston-centre-europe/projects-grants/religion-eu/conference/>
2. The conference was reported in the General Secretary's Report of *Faith in Europe – The Churches' European Relations Network* which is available on the organisation's website of <http://www.faithineurope.org.uk/agm2011rpt.html>
3. The commissioned commentary on 'Does God Matter to the EU?' published by *The European Voice* is available at <http://www.europeanvoice.com/folder/eustudies/202.aspx?artid=73565>
4. The commissioned commentary on 'Making Faith Matter in the European Union' and published by the ESRC's *Britain in 2012* (p. 47) is available at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/politics_tcm8-25192.pdf
5. The book launch in Brussels was summarised and commented on Vice-President's blog: http://surjan.fidesz-eu.hu/hir/szamit_e_az_isten_a_mai_kozeletben/
6. Interviewed and quoted in an article in *The New York Times*: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/18/world/europe/a-more-secular-europe-divided-by-the-cross.html>
7. Email correspondence with Dr Leustean for all above quotations from the current Advisor of the President of the European Commission; the Representative of the Church of England; the Jesuit European Office – OCIPE.
8. A list of outputs and summary of findings are available on the ESRC website at <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-000-22-3821/read>