editorial comment

The new *European Political Science* (*EPS*) is quickly taking shape. Although launched with vol. 1, no. 1 in autumn 2001, this issue has a new editorial team, a new board and a clearer idea of its mission.

Martin Rhodes, Professor of Public Policy at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, has joined Jim Newell as co-editor, and brings with him the full backing of the EUI and its President, Yves Mény (also current Chair of the ECPR executive), as well as the collaboration of Jacqueline Gordon (editorial assistant) and Peter Kennealy (who will edit a new section on 'Information'). The new board has been put together with several objectives in mind: to give a younger generation of scholars an opportunity to make a major contribution to this venture; to encourage input from as wide a range as possible of European countries; and to strike a balance between different areas of the discipline, and, of course, between genders. We as editors are looking forward to working with this new team, as well as with our existing group of corresponding editors, in promoting the ambitious agenda to which we are committed.

That agenda has been spurred on and encouraged by the ideas and advice put forward by our well wishers in the first issue of EPS. In line with the recommendations of Jean Blondel, we aspire to contribute to the debate on the future of European political science by encouraging critical analyses of the discipline – in both its organisational and intellectual aspects – within and across European countries. Concerning organisation and structure, there are many issues to spotlight, as also indicated by Virginia Sapiro in her greetings to the journal. These include the continued existence of many barriers to upward and cross-border mobility in a profession which (along with the rest of the university sector) is much better at studying European integration than implementing some of its fundamental principles; deteriorating career prospects for young scholars in many countries and poor rewards for excellence; and the need for stronger leadership in creating a vigorous, truly European research community that is also sensitive to national diversity and intellectual traditions.

Blondel also mentions the reform of undergraduate curricula, the changing needs of graduate training and the need to avoid country-specific 'parochialism' in political research. In forthcoming issues we will not only provide a forum for commentary and debate on these matters, but also a 'letters' section in which our readers can articulate their own opinions.

EPS should be more than a forum about issues internal to the profession, however, lest self-reflection degenerate into introspection. We will therefore bear closely in mind Blondel's call for greater professional visibility and the need to forge a stronger link between the academy and the 'real world' of politics. This point was also

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made by Peter Mair in his warning against the emergence of a rarefied and ivory-tower bound political science, and by Donatella della Porta in reminding us that the changing nature of politics and democratic participation requires a rethinking of some of our basic tools of analysis. To this end, we will encourage discussion and debate of the links between the profession and the wider world of politics, and its influence on public authorities and other private and public sector actors. The capacity of the profession to grasp the changing nature of contemporary politics will also be addressed.

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As Nelson Polsby and Alberta Sbragia pointed out in issue no. 1, boosting the external orientation of European political science also includes dialogue with the profession elsewhere in the world. That dialogue begins in this issue. In what is bound to be just the first stage of a debate about the 'Americanisation' of the profession, an American (albeit very cosmopolitan) political scientist – Philippe Schmitter – defends the particular traditions of European political science against what he calls a 'skewed transatlantic convergence toward American concepts, assumptions and methods'. But a defence of what is valuable in European difference should not, as Arend Lijphart warns, provide an excuse for Eurocentrism, but rather a bolder assertion of what is best in European political science. We welcome further contributions to this debate from political scientists in both Europe and the US.

We also welcome contributions to a dialogue between political science and different disciplines and sub-fields (as recommended by Birte Siim). And we welcome too reflections on the divide (pointed to by both Siim and Kaare Strøm) between analysis rooted in diverse identities and polities, and that which seeks ever more parsimonious and abstract theoretical statements about the world. While we will be soliciting articles on all of these themes, and seek to present 'symposia' on such disciplinary and sub-disciplinary issues, we also welcome submissions that address these debates within – and beyond – the political science community.

Finally, EPS will respond in a concrete way to the call by both Blondel and Max Kaase for further investment in comparative research and greater access to the kind of data that will propel it forward. In a new section on 'Information' edited by Peter Kennealy of the EUI, we will be providing both a regular update on new data sources and modes of access, as well as a forum for discussion of the qualities and pitfalls of different data bases by those who have used them. In doing so we hope further to facilitate the comparative research agenda that the ECPR has always endeavoured to promote.

Jim Newell and *Martin Rhodes*

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