editorial comment

This issue of *EPS* has two main themes. The first is the state of political science in Central and Eastern Europe. This region is slowly emerging from an era of Western 'intellectual colonisation', but, as our symposium reveals, still lacks the strength, self-confidence and resources in most parts of the discipline to assert its own autonomy. The conditions for collaboration among equals between 'East' and 'West' are slowly being put in place. But much has still to be done.

First, given the imperatives and uncertainties of EU enlargement, Europeans could make a bigger contribution to building up the discipline in the CEE countries - a process dominated to date by the US. Second, a better appreciation is required of the opportunities for new links between 'Western' and 'Eastern' scholars. The greater inclusion of East European researchers into wider networks and more mobility amongst younger researchers and graduate students (see Mochmann) are essential in this regard. Third, a greater degree of mutual understanding across borders is also needed. In publishing this symposium we hope that we will contribute, albeit in a small way, to encouraging this collective, transnational endeavour.

Our second major theme is reform. The articles by Bahle, Baker and May, Goldsmith and Berndtson, Capano and Mochmann tackle the issue from different perspectives, but they converge on key points. Two main impressions emerge: first, while reform is underway in most European systems, good intentions often lead to poor results; and second, mobility - both within university systems and between them - remains heavily constrained, despite domestic reforms and a range of initiatives at the EU level.

Thomas Bahle's article on the reform of the career structure in Germany is the first of many we will publish in *EPS* on the conditions of employment and prospects for advancement among younger members of the profession. His conclusions are bleak: as elsewhere, a professionalisation of graduate training is going hand in hand with a degradation of careers in terms of pay, conditions of work and opportunities. We are producing better graduates for a poorer profession. Most doctoral students do not enter the profession; and growing numbers of those who do so will leave it, disillusioned, early on. As Goldsmith and Berndtson argue, this has important implications for the ways in which we educate students in political science: for what are they being trained and what transferable skills are they acquiring? Senior members of the profession everywhere should be devoting more time and thought to this issue.

Goldsmith and Berndtson also make reference to the adverse consequences of university reform for the quality of working life, referring to the

https://doi.org/10.1057/eps.2002.23 Published online by Cambridge University Press

numerous cross-pressures facing academics. Baker and May discuss in depth the source and impact of one of these pressures - the new managerialism, especially regarding the implementation of 'quality' standards and procedures. While Britain may have experienced a surfeit of change in this direction, as the article by Capano suggests, other systems (in this case Italy) may be suffering from an absence of external criteria and evaluation, especially as regards curricular and teaching innovation. But cost pressures will induce a similar focus on the measurement of performance across Europe; and debates about what is appropriate in terms of external assessment, and clashes with traditional understandings of academic autonomy, will surely spread. We invite academics across the continent to join the debate on these issues in these pages.

Though they touch on much else besides, Goldsmith and Berndtson's main concern is with the development of a European educational space and, in particular, the creation across Europe of comparable quality and standards in degrees, diplomas and curricula. They point to a number of obstacles in all areas, but they are optimistic that EU initiatives - in particular the Sorbonne declaration on a 'Europe of Knowledge' and the Bologna agreement on a 'European Higher Education Area' - will make a difference.

But if the EU's training and mobility programme has already made a significant contribution to building up cross-national research infrastructures, Mochmann's analysis of the obstacles to mobility in the area of qualifications shows that much has still to be achieved. Mochmann also cautions that the EU has been more successful in promoting educational and student exchanges than researcher mobility - in part because that mobility is restricted by the growing demands made on younger academics in their home universities.

'mobility - both within university systems and between them - remains heavily constrained, despite domestic reforms and a range of initiatives at the EU level'

Goldsmith and Berndtson underline this point for the British case, referring to the increasing number of young academics on insecure and part-time contracts. If Bahle is correct in his forecasts, their German counterparts are also likely to experience greater insecurity and teaching overload in coming years. Both research and mobility will be the inevitable casualties.

Finally, Giliberto Capano argues that if Italian higher education in the past was 'totally inefficient and ineffective', recent and extensive reform undertaken in the spirit of the Bologna declaration 'runs the risk of turning into one enormous cosmetic operation'. His pessimistic appraisal gives pause for thought about the capacity of national systems for reform in line with ambitious European aspirations.

Martin Rhodes and *Jim Newell*

https://doi.org/10.1057/eps.2002.23 Published online by Cambridge University Press