

# **UACES 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**Bruges, 6-8 September 2010**

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UACES Annual Meeting,  
Brugge -- september 2010

**Technocracy is dead. Long live bureaucracy!**  
**On some recent changes to the civil service and the European  
Commission**

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Last paper in English :

<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/cep/journal/v8/n1/abs/cep20106a.html>  
<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/fp/journal/v7/n3/full/fp200917a.html>

The figure of the technocrat has been particularly prominent in significant historical and political configurations, including the United States in the 1920s and 1940s and France in the 1930s and again in 1950-1960. It is generally viewed as an indication of the emergence of new groups in the sphere of power<sup>1</sup>. The European Union is no exception to this political constant. Whatever the gap may be between myth and reality, the figure of the “European technocrat” has been shaped by the transformation of power relations brought about as a result of the rise of the European Union following the redefinition of national political roles in relation to Europe and the processes shaping the sociogenesis of a European civil service<sup>2</sup>. While the social representation of the “Eurocrat” has been determined to a great extent by external pressures, it is important not to underestimate the role of the members and administrators of the Commission, who have not always held a negative view of the Technocracy. In his memoirs – which bore the significant subtitle *Souvenir d'un technocrate* (Memories of a technocrat) – Robert Lemaignien (one of the first two French commissioners) made a case for “accepting this irony” – opposing reason and technocratic competence to the double obstacle of the passionate instincts of politics and the bureaucratic absence of vision (not to say blindness). In a stylisation and distinction characteristic of the building of the civil service and its distinctive “spirit”, Lemaignien insisted crucially that a technocrat is not a bureaucrat. The figure of the Eurocrat has tended more recently to merge with the socio-political reality of the presidentialization of the European Commission during the Delors era. Conceived as a figure reflected in the profile of the cabinet and portfolio stalwart long embodied by Delors and his immediate entourage of top French civil servants (including P. Lamy and others<sup>3</sup>), this representation embodied the political voluntarism of the administration and (more generally) its ambiguous status as a semi-political, semi-administrative body.

Over forty years after the publication of Lemaignien’s memoirs and nearly fifteen years after the end of the Delors era, the transformations of this myth and of its uses warrant further examination. Given the nature of the processes that have shaped the recent history of the EU, the issue as to whether the disqualification of the figure of “European technocracy” has triumphed and imposed itself from within seems a legitimate question to raise. Very few actors operating within the Commission have sought to defend this figure, particularly after the resignation of the Santer Commission. While it had been taken more or less for granted in the past, the technocrat has tended increasingly to stand for a guilty figure used primarily to justify the structural reorganization of the European civil service as a body of un (or de)differentiated managers. The heroic days of the technocratic era appear to be over, giving way to the era of bureaucrats, from whom Lemaignien was so keen to distance himself.

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<sup>1</sup> LAGROYE, J., “Les figures du technocrate: invention et usages scientifiques et sociaux. Introduction”, in *La question technocratique*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, collection “science politique de l’Europe”, 1999, pp.109-128.

<sup>2</sup> GEORGAKAKIS, D., “Les réalités d’un mythe: figure de l’eurocrat et institutionnalisation de l’Europe politique”, in DULONG D. and Dubois V. (eds.), *La question technocratique*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, collection “science politique de l’Europe”, 1999, pp.109-128.

<sup>3</sup> On this particular point, see ROSS G., *Jacques Delors and European Integration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 and KAUPPI N., *Democracy, social resources and political power in the European Union*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005.

The purpose of this paper is to re-examine this transformation. Its central hypothesis is that this transformation is not the reflection (or at least not solely the reflection) of the discourse of older civil servants bemoaning the end of the old order, but reflects instead a more substantial change rooted in the balance sheets of the “Delors heritage” and the definition of the administration of the Commission conceived as a political place. To understand this transformation, this paper will not rely on technical interpretations (or administration-centred interpretations) of administrative reforms undergone by the Commission. It will situate them instead in a more general socio-political context. Two kinds of analysis that are often unconnected will be carried out: an analysis of the conditions governing the emergence of a turn in the (symbolic) definition of administrative excellence in the last fifteen years followed by an analysis of the effects of this process on reality<sup>4</sup>.

### **The end of the Delors era and the transformation of European administrative excellence**

One commonly-held view is that the shift in the “administrative culture” of the Commission (particularly the managerial turn) is a consequence of the “crisis borne out of the resignation of the Santer Commission”. Yet even a short history of reform policies (and of the definitions of administrative excellence contained therein) is enough to show that the turn began well before the emergence of the crisis. While the origins of the crisis are not altogether unrelated to the turn, the crisis itself has been used merely as an (efficient) justification.

A comprehensive outline of the history of the civil service and of the European Commission is beyond the scope of this paper. But it is important to emphasize that the history of the European civil service is anything but a linear history. The very existence of a European civil service was surrounded from the outset by controversy. For instance, a civil service was not in any way part of Jean Monnet’s plans for a European community. French representatives – who are now quick to bemoan the disappearance of the “Franco-German model” of European civil service – were in fact strongly opposed to its creation. The idea of a European civil service owes in fact far more to W. Hallstein than it does to the French (with the probable exception of E. Noel), whose European endeavours tended to remain focused on developments other than the institutions of the common market<sup>5</sup>. The highly eventful history of the European civil service is to some extent a product of the many reforms that have shaped its development. The status of the civil service was defined over a long period and was not definitively established until after the fusion of EU institutions, however significant a moment this may have been. Many reports have recommended an improved administrative organization of institutions, such as the round table report on EU personnel issues in 1970, the Lambert report on the careers of civil servants and the Spierenburg report (to name but a few).

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<sup>4</sup> This paper outlines the main issues of current research-in-progress aimed at producing a socio-political interpretation of the recent history of the European Commission. For reasons of space and in the interests of readability, most of the social science apparatus has been left out. Frequent reference will be made to previous work by the author and to observations in the literature that provide further support to the argument outlined in this paper.

<sup>5</sup> On these points, see in particular MANGENOT M., *Une Europe Improbable. Les hauts fonctionnaires français dans la construction européenne*, doctoral thesis, IEP de Strasbourg, 2000.

Yet the fact remains that these reforms have done little to challenge the representation of a “administration de mission” (focused on future, with high level of knowledge and expertise, long term vision, but also flexibility and sense of institutional opportunism, etc.) that has continued to define the public image of EU administration, however different it may have appeared in formal (‘morphological’) terms. Administrative excellence has been closely connected with the idea of a European project and with the ability of civil servants to implement the word of prophets in the face of significant political turmoil. While Richard Hay had already levelled serious criticisms against technocracy, the agenda of the Commission was focused at the time on issues other than administrative reform. These political issues were relayed by a process of political steering (a process that does not necessarily equate to bureaucratic steering). As noted by George Ross, this entailed the control of administration by the cabinet, the appointment of top civil servants at key positions and also (needless to say) staff motivation as part of the dynamics of communitarian revival. In short, the context of political revival and the growth of missions within the Commission was reflected by a political situation in which the president of the Commission remained the strong man, while the issues concerning the administrative organization of the Commission and the mission of civil servants were, if not secondary issues, at least significantly subordinated to the political stakes and challenges of the Commission.

The point of inflection can be located at the end of this period (though no later). The context of the “Delors moment” – and the unique political configuration which it reflects – changed significantly after the publication of the 1993 White Paper and (more generally) the final renewal of the mandate of the president of the Commission<sup>6</sup>. Most commentators noted that a period in which member states regained control began after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty<sup>7</sup>. This situation also reflects a gradual turn in the position adopted by Germany. During the final Delors Commission (and against the latter’s recommendations), the commissioner in charge of the budget, financial control and the Cohesion Fund, Peter Schmidhuber (a Bavarian conservative close to Strauss), succeeded in having a report ratified that was designed (as Bauer notes) as a political testament for his successors. The report included severe criticisms levelled at the lack of attention paid to organization and financial management in favour of policy content and the under-evaluation of the funding programme. The text was ratified against Delors’s political will and vote (Laffan 1997a: 181).

The significance of this event should not be underestimated since it shaped part of the action of Delors’s successor. The criticisms levelled at previous management practices were revived by Jacques Santer, who defined administrative reform as one of the three main priorities of his mandate. In his inaugural speech to the Parliament in Strasbourg on January 17 1995, Santer insisted that EU institutions needed to remain close to citizens and to demonstrate democratic, efficient and sound management practices. Santer’s slogan – “to do less, but to do it better” – needs to be construed in the context of the succession. It was reflected in the definition of the

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<sup>6</sup> DRAKE H., *Jacques Delors, Perspective on a European leader*, London, Routledge, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> On this point, see KASSIM H. AND MENON A., ‘EU Member States and the Prodi Commission’ in D.Dimitrakopoulos (ed) *The Changing Commission*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

two main foci of political efforts (i.e. administrative reform and the fight against fraud), which were closely linked and placed under the responsibility of the Commissioners of the two new Nordic countries, i.e. Erkki Liikanen (a former social democrat finance minister in Finland, who took on the portfolio of administrative reform) and Anita Gradin (a former social democrat trade minister also in charge of the budget, relations with the mediator, financial control and the prevention of fraud).

This paper will not outline the details of this transformation. Several key aspects of the process are nonetheless worth emphasizing. The policy was largely promoted and mediated as the sign of a break away from the previous Commission and (more generally) from a “southern” definition of administration. The focus now was not on the “European project” (however vague the expression may have been in the previous period) so much as on “good management”. The policy subsequently shaped a markedly different construction of the issue of administrative reform. Administrative reform was thus not merely conceived as the chief priority, but was also directly associated with the issue of fraud – as illustrated by the title of the paper of the Commission on “Sound financial management and administration: improving action against incompetence, financial irregularities, fraud and corruption”, published in 1997<sup>8</sup>. One final point is worth noting: the reversal should not merely be construed as a discursive shift to the extent that it was also embodied in institutional policies of internal reform, such as SEM (Sound Efficient Management), Map 2000, and a massive step-up in the fight against fraud, i.e. a whole range of practices that are not without consequences, particularly in terms of the genesis of the scandal that eventually led to the resignation of the Santer Commission<sup>9</sup>.

A reminder of this history shows that the transformation of representations of administrative excellence began before the resignation of the Santer Commission. It also led to the development of another relation between the Santer resignation and the Kinnock reform. Far from representing the functional remedy to the issue of “mis-management” that is deemed to have caused the Santer crisis, the Kinnock reform appears to be part of a break that is both more political and on a larger scale. The conditions of the resignation of the Santer Commission have already been analyzed<sup>10</sup>. But it is important to remember that “administrative malfunctioning” (even fraud) was not the root of the “problem” since this particular issue was relatively insignificant in comparison with the issues affecting the majority of member-states<sup>11</sup>. In a period of post-Delors transition and relative political weakness within the Commission, it provided an opportunity for a whole range of actors to

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<sup>8</sup> SEC (97) 2198.

<sup>9</sup> It is important to remember that, in this instance, the norm created the fraud. On the effects of this process on the Santer crisis, see my “Les instrumentalisation de la morale. Lutte anti-fraude, scandale et nouvelle gouvernance européenne”, in J-BRIQUET J.-L. & GARRAUD P. (eds.), *Juger la politique*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, coll. “Res Publica”, 2001, pp.263-286.

<sup>10</sup> GEORGAKAKIS D., “La démission de la Commission européenne: scandale et tournant institutionnel (oct. 1998-mars 1999)”, *Cultures et conflits*, no.38 & 39, 2001, pp.39-71. Et « [Was it really just ‘poor communication’? Lessons from the Santer Commission’s resignation](#) » in Andy Smith (Ed.) *Politics and the European Commission. Actors, interdependence, legitimacy*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 119-133.

<sup>11</sup> This is a common problem in the process of constructing an administration. For the purposes of comparison, see Etienne Will’s study of the Chinese administration.

state their opposition, or merely to articulate their position (as was the case for a number of parliamentarians and journalists). It was precisely the mobilization of these actors that began the process that eventually led to the resignation of the Santer Commission. The Kinnock reform might be said therefore to have been not the result of the crisis but rather to have benefited (i.e. its promoters) from the interpretations and political situation generated by the “crisis”.

Whatever the roots of the crisis, the specific impact of the resignation needs to be emphasized. It might have been assumed (albeit somewhat optimistically) that the member-states would have concluded that additional means were required to support a further development of the skills and activities of the Commission. The Commission might have been expected to justify (if not positively strengthen) itself<sup>12</sup>, while its agents might have been expected to produce a conflicting political interpretation of the nature and origins of the crisis. Yet in a way that is ultimately quite revealing of the true nature of the European politico-institutional field (particularly from the perspective of the structural difficulties encountered by the agents of the Commission in confronting political issues *politically*), it is in fact the very opposite that happened. The resignation – the first of its kind – fostered a “climate” of profound scepticism towards the Commission that is worth reconstructing. The majority of agents in the field rallied to the smallest common denominators of the interpretation of the crisis (albeit for different motives), i.e. that democracy triumphed over technocracy and that the redemption of the Commission required a radical transformation of its administrative practices.

This is a crucial point. While reform projects under Santer were subject to fierce opposition from civil service unions<sup>13</sup>, the period of “crisis” considerably weakened the unions, enabling the process of reform to regain momentum. What was already latent in the previous period may thus have appeared in a still clearer light, highlighted by the facts revealed by the recent crisis. Nothing remained to oppose the rise of the “new culture”, of a new morality and of a sense of efficiency and performance (i.e. the keywords of the Kinnock white paper), though now with all the strength and conviction of evidence.

The politics of reform may therefore be justified *ex-post-facto* as a product of the crisis. Attempts at justification are in evidence in all of the relevant official documents. Reformers also benefited from support from other quarters, including (chiefly British) academics who have tended to interpret the crisis (albeit for different reasons) as a consequence of mis-management and in some cases as a more general

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<sup>12</sup> While this hypothesis may appear somewhat daring in retrospect, it is not altogether absurd. Many parliamentarians and journalists involved in the process that led to the scandal and subsequent resignation of the Commission belonged to a communitarianized pole of actors and were far from hostile to EU institutions. Besides, most of the debates in Parliament pointed (at least in theory) to increased parliamentarization, which entailed in return the transformation of the Commission into a European government, a point emphasized by the new president of the Commission (R. Prodi) at his inauguration.

<sup>13</sup> See my article “Une mobilisation formatrice: les eurofonctionnaires contre la réforme du statut (printemps 1998)” in GEORGAKAKIS D., (ed.), *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisations de l'Union européenne*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2002, pp.55-84.

sign of the failure of a model<sup>14</sup>. This view has been defended by a wide range of groups (British, budgetary profiles, young people) and has been conceded by agents particularly affected by the crisis. The President of the Commission also lent his support to this view (or at the very least gave relatively free reins to Vice-President Kinnock), seemingly in order to distance himself from other potential developments, including the search for a new leadership as part of the definition of a “new governance”. The attempt by the president to embody a new Delors at the end of his mandate proved a failure. A similar point is reflected in the results of the policies outlined in the white paper on the new European governance. Supported by Prodi and steered by Jérôme Vignon, a former member of the Delors Cabinet and later head of the prospective unit, the white paper was announced amid great pomp and circumstance, signifying a return to a heroic period underlined by the revival of the great symbols of the Delors era. Yet it eventually discredited not only those who supported it but also the underlying model – which was deemed to be too French, too theoretical or too complex, and insufficiently practical or “to the point”. At the end of Prodi’s mandate, the technocratic model appeared in short to have had its day<sup>15</sup>.

## II. The realization of the interpretations of the crisis: bureaucratization against technocracy

Interpretations matter, and, as noted above, they also produce very real effects. The same observation applies to the proposed solutions to crises, however unrelated they may actually be. The shifting definition of European administrative excellence since the end of the Delors era has not only been played out in political interpretations and official discourse aimed at justifying the process of reform. It has also generated effects on reality). The last administrative reform – i.e. the fruit of the transformation – established it as part of a range of formal practices and realities. While the reform signified the end of the technocratic model in terms of content, it also resulted in increased bureaucratization within the Commission.

An outline of all the different facets of reform is beyond the scope of this paper. Yet it is important to emphasize that the purpose of some of these facets was to transform the practices associated with the technocratic model. Such is the case for instance with the imperative of mobility. While mobility is one of the common points shared by all the reforms produced by new public management, it is particularly significant in the European context. Michelle Cini has rightly noted that because they held permanent positions, European civil servants were long able to truly *occupy* the position they occupied – in the sense that the nature of their positions contributed significantly to their technical understanding of particular issues. While mobility can be justified from an abstract point of view in a wide variety of ways (such as strengthening an *esprit de corps* or breaking away from the centrifugal dynamics of the Commission), it presupposes a loss of skills that takes on an altogether more

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<sup>14</sup> On these points, see the research (from different perspectives) by SHORE C., *Building Europe*, London: Routledge, 1999, and STEVENS A. and H., *Brussels Bureaucrats? The Administration of the European Union*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> On these points, see GEORGAKAKIS D., “La gouvernance de la gouvernance ou le leadership politique contrarié de la Commission européenne”, in GEORGAKAKIS D., & LASSALLE M. (eds.), *La nouvelle gouvernance européenne. Les usages politique d’un concept*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2007.



significant function than in the member states. The fact that fundamental skills tend to become subordinated to managerial skills is in itself an indicator of a major formal change, though other developments also point to this change of practice. The promotion of a culture of assessment, the accountability of activities, and the responsabilization of top-ranked managers produced a more distinct break between the political authority of the College and civil service – i.e. a break away from the semi-administrative, semi-political model that had long characterized the administration of the Commission.

In addition to the bureaucratic turn reflected in the spirit of the reform, the unintended effects of its implementation also need to be considered. It is clear that the implementation of some of the precepts of the reform has been particularly ambivalent in the specific context of European institutions. The creation of new (and supposedly flexible) rules of conduct in the area of new public management raises an issue in an administration underpinned by a strong connection with the legal realm. This connection is clearly in evidence in the writings of British scholars (such as the Stevens), and is not the manifestation of a continental model. It also concerns weightier foundations, such as the role long ascribed to lawyers in the recruitment process (particularly at a time when the various branches of communitarian law were the only existing branches on the training market for EU careers), but also a practical context in which the diversity of origins and conflicts means that the common rule is one of the few elements upon which common practices might be founded. The potential flexibility enabled by the reform entailed the production of additional rules (or at the very least construed as such in practice) and resulted in the opposite effects from those intended by the reform.

The moral aspects of the reform and the production of codes of good conduct need to be viewed in the same light. These were not implemented to promote “good practices” so much as to establish an imperative likely to generate sanctions, made intransigent and rigid with all the practical consequences entailed by such rigidity for the organization of work, efficiency and the investment of agents. At the same level, the insistence with which accountability was implemented and the connection with legal responsibility also produced specific effects. As a symptomatic phenomenon of the triumph of instrumental reason over objective reason (as philosophers might put it), we might ask whether practice does not now aim to be more heavily involved in making activities accountable than in the activities themselves. This is also, parenthetically, the issue raised by the promotion of performance over efficiency, i.e. the capacity to generate effects. While this is not in theory specific to the EU, we may nevertheless surmise that in view of the intensity of the monitoring relations between states and the “trauma” of the resignation, the pressure would have been particularly strong and likely in particular to result in conduct governed by indicators to the detriment of initiative.

At an empirical level, evidence of this is provided by the reception of the reform among civil servants. No scholar working on the Commission and conducting interviews has failed to note that the reception of the reform could not be taken for granted and that many civil servants within the Commission stated (at least off the record) that the degree of objective pressure exerted on their activities has

increased<sup>16</sup>. More systematic indicators might also be invoked, including the success of the Union for Renewal and Democracy compared with the Syndicate Union in personnel committee elections. While they voiced their common opposition to the Liikanen reform, civil service unions remained divided during negotiation processes, with the Syndicate Union (which had previously been in the majority) agreeing to negotiate while most of the other unions formed an alliance hostile to reform and negotiation. The unions opposing the reform enjoyed a clear victory in the last union elections. More generally, all of the unions are becoming increasingly radicalized and their discourse has remained unchanged. While the reforming unions initially emphasized the material benefits of reform, the most recent controversies (surrounding for instance the system of assessment and promotion) are indicative of a collective tough stance articulated around some of the more historical values of the European civil service.

These observations are corroborated by scholarly research published recently in top-ranking international journals. Two studies merit particular attention. In a recent article drawn from a conference paper entitled "Reforming the Commission: Has the pendulum swung too far?", Ezra Suleiman and Antonis Ellinas (Princeton) showed that as a result of the increasing number of rules, chief executive officers, who should have found some leeway in the reform, found themselves instead paralyzed by the fear of risk. One of the chief executive officers interviewed as part of this research pointed out that "people are now afraid of fraud and their fear is paralyzing, and only a small number of people are willing to take initiatives". Another chief executive officer emphasized that "there is a distinction between a mistake and fraud. Now that we want zero mistakes, it cannot possibly work"<sup>17</sup>.

Mickael Bauer made a number of similar observations in a recent article published in the *Journal of European Public Policy* (August 2008) in a study focusing on heads of units, i.e. the policy-writers themselves, rather than the highest ranks of the EU hierarchy. The title of the conclusion of Bauer's paper is particularly telling: "Better managed but deprived entrepreneurs". Using a range of closed questions, Bauer showed that the general assessment of the reform is largely negative since nearly 60% of respondents disagreed with the idea that their unity is more efficient today. The suggestion that they are better able to concentrate on major issues was opposed by 85% of respondents, while 71% of respondents disagreed with the idea that the reform had increased their autonomy, and just 30% considered that the hierarchical order had been made clearer. The open questions pointed unambiguously to the view that "the Kinnock reform can be summed up in one word: bureaucracy", as noted by one respondent. Another respondent remarked: "Kinnock is a disaster and a 300% bureaucracy increase with form accounting for 80% and substance just for 20%", while another insisted that "what has been done is tantamount to castration. Bureaucracy and security measures kill the potential for productivity". In criticizing the "control mania", respondents denounced the creation of a "culture of fear". Many respondents also viewed the reform as the chief cause of the increased

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<sup>16</sup> LEVY R.J., "European Commission overload and the pathology of management reform: garbage cans, rationality and risk aversion, *Public Administration* 84 (2), 2006, pp.423-439.

<sup>17</sup> ELLINAS A. and SULEIMAN E., "Reforming the Commission: Has the pendulum swung too far?", *Journal of European Public Policy*, forthcoming (August 2010).

weakness of the Commission, divested of its “political function” and “original mission”.

Ought we to view these views as necessarily temporary perceptions? This is not an altogether implausible view. It remains that the reality of bureaucracy has every chance of lasting in view of the current morphological changes affecting the Commission – the last though by no means least issue that merits attention. The reform has produced significant morphological transformations. The first concerns administrative growth. Since 1995, there has been a continued increase in staff numbers within the Commission itself, with numbers rising from 19,984 to 25,380 – representing an increase of 5,400 additional staff. Including other European institutions, staff numbers have increased from 28,868 to 42,548, with a substantial proportion of the 3000 agents linked to the agencies. This represents a significant morphological effect. While the concept of “mission administration” could be construed to imply reduced administrative size, the effect of size and increasing numbers complicates matters significantly, except if the matter of an increased division of EU administration is invoked (a point worth noting in view of the particular morphology of the Commission)<sup>18</sup>. In a context in which the size of administration tends to increase and in which the purpose of the reform is to fight against internal competition and to re-establish a “common culture”, it seems unlikely that the trend towards an increased bureaucratization of practices will be curbed. Such developments seem all the more likely given that the general count is not sufficiently accurate since it only takes account of civil servants and assimilated categories (i.e. temporary employees), to which contractors, SNEs, temps and service providers (amounting to 9,271 people for the Commission alone) need to be added. Interestingly, the number of contractors currently stands at 5,644<sup>19</sup>.

In terms of the specific nature of the newly created jobs, the process of bureaucratization is still more in evidence in the sense that there has been a significant increase in the number of managerial positions. A recent audit carried out in the European Parliament produced a number of figures<sup>20</sup> that warrant further analysis. At a financial level, the audit indicated that the transfer of ex ante controls to different Directorates-General and bodies requires greater staff numbers in the area of budgetary and financial execution. The report also states that 48.9% of employees working in the Commission now work in administrative support. 31.8% of employees work in administrative assistance and coordination, while 9.6% work on budgetary and financial matters and 7.5% in translation services.

To conclude, we might say that there has been a significant turn. The Commission at the end of the Delors era – an issue at the heart of the concerns driving the renewal of research in European studies in the 1990s – offers an altogether different picture. However significant this moment may have been (especially in France), it would be

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<sup>18</sup> The first wave of the Liikanen reform was directed precisely against compartmentalization, updated by the anthropological report on the Commission led by Abélès, Bellier and MacDonald.

<sup>19</sup> This significant figure has been a matter of controversy to the extent that contractors should not carry out the duties of civil servants. Other commentators underline that it is the result of the unclear officialization of positions in the previous conjuncture and a mechanical effect of the process of agencification.

<sup>20</sup> Committee on Budgetary control (Rapporteur: Ingeborg Gräßle): Working Document on “Governance in the European Commission”, 2007.

unwise to make a case for the persistence of this reality. It remains that no definitive conclusions concerning the weakened state of the Commission should be drawn. Holders of this view may legitimately be concerned since both in terms of the values which it is now able to embody and in terms of its objective sociological structure, it is now quite far from representing the body driving the process of European integration which it embodied for so long. But they may also hope that a clearer division between politics and the administrative system resulting from it will create the conditions for a repoliticization of the College as a political body, and that the morality which it is now assumed to embody will create the conditions of a competitive advantage over the administrations of member-states. Whatever the outcome of this view, its fate appears to lie in the hands of what may be said about it or done with it by actors who, in the member-states, the other institutions of the institutional triangle, like within its very heart, remain external to what it may once have been or represented. For observers and actors alike, this is a real challenge.