Finland: smooth adaptation to European values and institutions

Introduction: EU membership as the beginning of a new political era

Finland joined the European Union together with Austria and Sweden at the beginning of 1995. At first glance, Finnish membership might appear as a rapid change of political orientation, given the inflexible policy of neutrality the country conducted until the early 1990s. In spite of the brevity of national adaptation and consideration, the decision to follow Sweden and submit an application for EU membership was based upon an overwhelming political consensus. All the major political elites, including party and interest organisations, the leadership, key actors in the private sector and the media were in favour of Finnish membership. In the referendum for EU membership in October 1994, the elites were supported by 57 per cent of the people which supported membership. One characteristic of the Finnish EU policy thus seems to be that it relies upon a firm and stable popular support. A division of the country, however, took place in the referendum and it is a division that has given expression to the limits of the governmental policy ever since. Membership in the Union was opposed by farmers and the rural population because it was seriously believed to risk their source of livelihood. The Farmers' Union was the most significant unitary force opposing Finnish membership in the campaign preceding the referendum. Its political importance has, however, been reduced by the reluctance of the agrarian Centre Party to join the opposition. The Centre Party leaders seem to have assumed that such a policy would block the party's road to government and, furthermore, the party will be increasingly dependent upon urban voters in the near future.

During the first years of membership the Finnish government adopted an enthusiastic and unreserved line of policy towards the Union. In the core issues of the Union's political future, Finland showed a high degree of flexibility and a preparedness to join the 'deepeners' of the Union rather than its Nordic neighbours conducting a more reserved policy.¹ Despite the generally positive attitude towards the Union, this position

cannot be understood without paying attention to a particular factor affecting Finnish political thinking. After the Cold War era, and the difficult position of Finland between the two superpowers, the Finnish decision to join the Union should be seen very much in the light of security policy. It was seen as a decision to join the Western unity that had been beyond Finland's reach during the five long decades of the Cold War. This attitude did not limit itself to political elites but has been shown by opinion polls. Security remains an important factor behind the positive stand adopted.

The main constitutional amendments

The Finnish EU membership is perceived as a new positive challenge in the Finnish political system and seems to be strongly accepted by a majority of its actors. The membership has been put into effect by keeping the constitutional changes to a minimum. The act of joining the Union was not at a general level – for instance in the form of a transfer of powers, written into the Finnish Constitution. EU membership did result in a number of constitutional amendments, mainly concerning the division of powers between the different political organs. These amendments had largely been put into effect in connection with Finnish European Economic Area (EEA) membership in 1992. The main reason for the constitutional amendments can be found in the extensive powers that the president has in foreign policy. According to Section 33 of the Finnish Constitution Act (Form of Government Act): ‘the relations of Finland with foreign powers shall be decided by the President, but treaties with foreign powers must be approved by the Parliament insofar as they contain provisions which pertain to legislation or which according to the Constitution otherwise require the consent of the Parliament’. In connection with the EEA membership, a specific Section (33a) was added to the main Section in order to balance the powers of the President and the Council of State in EEA matters, and to prevent the powers that by definition belonged to the sphere of domestic policy from being transferred to the president.² The ‘Council of State’ is the term used in Finland when the legal-institutional framework of the government is referred to. In certain contexts the term ‘Council of State’ even involves the president. The importance of the amendment increased when Finland joined the Union. The other amendment made to the constitution related to the EEA membership, and gaining more importance as Finland joined the Union, purported to confirm the parliament's participation in the national preparation of EU issues as well as its right to the necessary information. There have also been some institutional changes. The Grand Committee, whose role was to check the legislative process, has now been given a new task as a committee of EU affairs. The prime minister was given the obligation to inform the parliamentary committees of issues that would be handled

in the European Council and the Council of State was given the obligation to forward to the parliament propositions to those legal acts. Approval rests with the parliament.

Separate from these EU amendments, there has been a comprehensive modification of the Finnish Constitution, which will result in a new Constitution which entered into force in the year 2000.³ The amendments made in this new Constitution to the sections related to the Union do not directly originate in membership itself but are rather a reflection of the political aspirations to curtail presidential powers. In the new Constitution, the Council of State is for the first time placed on par with the president regarding foreign policy matters, making it a key actor in EU policy.⁴ The Council of State leads the preparations of all EU issues, even those of the CFSP, and is responsible for keeping the parliament informed. Despite the majority of the eight new chapters of the Constitution being related to EU issues (under the title of 'International Relations'), there is a specific section governing the transfer of sovereignty, which is not included. The general articles of the new Constitution, however, reflect the change that has taken place in Finland's international commitments by mentioning international co-operation and giving peace, human rights and the development of society as its objectives.

The political priorities of membership

The Finnish membership in the Union was negotiated by a government led by the agrarian Centre Party and farming and farmers' unions and interest groups. Consequently, this group came to dominate the official agenda when Finland entered the Union. In May 1995, a new government was built on the results of the parliamentary elections which had been won by the Social Democrats. The new 'Rainbow Government' consisted of representatives of all the major parties with the exception of the Centre Party. The government that sat thorough the entire legislative period became famous for its pro-European policy. Unemployment was the key issue that dominated the domestic EU agenda and this issue was emphasised at the IGC.⁵ The Finnish government consequently promoted a firmer EU position in the fight against unemployment. In the IGC, the government emphasised other policy areas with a clear connection to Nordic values such as openness and transparency in EU decision-making, the environment, equality between the sexes, and social policy. Institutional questions have been adopted with a more cautious attitude, however. In addition to these general political goals, the Finnish government has taken pains to launch a political programme called 'The Northern Dimension' in the Union. The essence of the programme was defined as emphasising the positive interdependence of the Union, Russia and the Baltic Sea region. The emphasis of the programme is on sectors such as energy networks, trade and environmental protection.

The parliamentary elections of March 1999 gave a clear vote of confidence to the 'Rainbow Government' which, consequently, continued the old party political composition into a new electoral period. There was a reluctance to make far-reaching amendments to the government. The new government also had major challenges to face in its EU policy. Finland's first presidency of the Union commenced in July 1999 and the agenda was expected to be filled with topics from EU enlargement and the implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty to the preparation of a common defence and institutional reform.

The national policy-cycle: towards a new decentralisation of decision-making

The starting point for the national division of labour in EU matters is the division of powers between the President and the Council of State (Figure 6.1). This is reflective of the entire political system. The clarification of this relationship has taken place in favour of the Council of State, implying a reinforcement of the role of the prime minister as the leading actor of Finnish EU policy. As the leader of the general foreign policy the president, however, leads the Finnish CFSP participation. Under the new Constitution, this role will take place in co-operation with the Council of State. The leadership of Finnish foreign policy in general will take place in co-operation with the Council of State, as far as the Constitution is concerned. In the Finnish case the main responsibility for the control of EU issues and the preparation of the Finnish position belongs to the competent ministries.⁶ The relevant ministry examines an issue as far as its political, economic and legal aspects are concerned and formulates the Finnish position. The ministries are assisted by a system of sections that refer to different types of working groups with specific areas and issues to cover. These consist of both government officials and representatives of interest organisations. According to a 1998 Finnish study, the key position of ministries and their officials mirrors the practical exercise of powers and influence in the domestic EU process.⁷ Interministerial contacts and negotiations seem to be another important channel as far as influence on EU issues is concerned. In addition to the increasing number of international tasks in the ministries, Finnish EU membership has led to the establishment of new co-ordinating bodies in the government. At the lower level there is the Committee for EU Affairs in which the ministries as well as the president's office, the Bank of Finland and the Chancellor of Justice are represented. The Committee deals with issues in which agreement has not been reached in the sections and with issues that demand more wide-ranging decisions. If there is a difference of opinion regarding the Finnish position in the Committee of EU Affairs the matter can be

Figure 6.1 The national level of European decision-making – Finland

brought to the leading co-ordinating organ, that is, to the Cabinet European Union Committee dealing with general EU issues of great importance. The Cabinet Committee is led by the prime minister and all the government parties are represented in it. Owing to the division of powers between the Council of State and the president, the issues related to the CFSP are discussed in another Cabinet Committee – in the Cabinet Committee of Foreign and Security Policy that is led by the president.

There was even a new administrative unit established in 1994 to administrate the co-ordinating activities and to function as an administrative secretariat for the two committees. This unit, the EU Secretariat, is located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but as the co-ordinating activities in general are firmly connected with the Prime Minister's Office efforts have been taken to move the EU Secretariat there.⁸ A small unit of EU affairs was established in the Prime Minister's Office in 1996. Its main task is to co-ordinate preparations connected with the Finnish EU Presidency. The official Finnish contact to Brussels, the Permanent Representation of Finland in the Union, is the organ that takes the official Finnish position to the EU political machinery. It represents Finland in all EU institutions and supplies information on the activities of the Union to the Finnish administration. It is a large representation with a staff consisting of eighty officials representing different ministries and other governmental bodies. The role of the Permanent Representation has been considered mainly administrative and intermediary and its impact on the substance of the Finnish policy is secondary.⁹

At the level of the Finnish central administration, membership in the Union has implied a remarkable challenge to the traditional position of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the key unit in the administration of international relations. Its role used to be emphasised by the presidential leadership of Finnish foreign policy and by the direct link that used to be established between the Foreign Ministry and the president in the conduct of foreign affairs. At the beginning of Finnish EU membership, the Foreign Ministry had a good grip on its old position owing to the co-ordinating functions it was given in the national EU process. Now, this position is becoming increasingly challenged as it seems to be gradually moving towards the prime minister and his office.

In general, differences in decision-making procedures at the EU level are not taken into account in any systematic way in the national political machinery. The division of EU matters into first and second pillar issues, however, is reflected in the preparation and decision-making in the government as well as in the parliament. In the parliament, the Grand Committee prepares all the other EU issues with the exception of second pillar issues, which are handled in the Foreign Affairs Committee.

The parliament as an active actor in the national EU process

In the Finnish case the parliament can be treated as an active participant in the formulation of Finnish EU policy. Its role is based upon the constitutional amendments connected with Finnish EU membership and is carried out mainly in the form of committee activity. The role of the parliament was one of the major concerns related to the Finnish political system immediately before membership – a fact which still mirrors a certain awareness of the organisation concerning its own position. The system of parliamentary participation that was created in the Finnish EU system is similar to the Danish case with the exception that Finland's system is less centralised to one parliamentary committee. In the Finnish case almost all parliamentary committees are involved in the handling of EU issues.

The constitutional base for the Parliament's participation in EU issues can be found in Section 33 of the Finnish Constitution Act (Form of Government Act), according to which 'the relations of Finland with foreign powers shall be decided by the President, but treaties with foreign powers must be approved by the Parliament insofar as they contain provisions which pertain to legislation or which according to the Constitution otherwise require the consent of the Parliament'. When Finland joined the EEA system, a new sub-section (33a) was added to the main paragraph according to which 'The Parliament shall participate in the approval of those decisions taken by international organs which according to the Constitution require the consent of the Parliament in the manner stipulated by the Parliament Act. The Finnish Parliament shall, consequently, participate in the approval of those decisions taken in the EU which, according to an established interpretation of the constitution, would belong to its sphere of competences.' Provisions concerning the details are included in the Parliamentary Act (Section 54). The government must forward to the Speaker any proposals within the EU organs which the government has notice of and which belong to the parliament's competence. These matters are called 'U matters', referring to the obligatory character of the parliamentary approval. Most 'U matters' consist of Commission proposals for Council regulations or directives. Other categories are proposals for agreements between the European Community and third parties and a group of miscellaneous texts including, for instance, the draft budget prepared by the Commission.¹⁰

The Speaker shall submit such a matter to the Grand Committee and to any competent specialised committee for analysis and opinion. This takes place in the form of a communication, which also includes a tentative position of the government. The matter is usually handled first in a specialised committee, which gives its opinion to the Grand Committee. On this basis, the Grand Committee then expresses the view of the Finnish parliament.¹¹

The position taken by the Grand Committee must be seen to imply a strong political commitment to the government which, in an overwhelming majority of cases, has not deviated from it. It must, however, be taken into account that the government's proposals, when submitted to the parliament, have the support of a parliamentary majority. In this case, the position of the parliament completes rather than modifies them.¹²

According to another paragraph (e) in Section 54 of the Parliament Act, the Grand Committee shall receive information and documentation from the government on any EU matter the Grand Committee requests, or the government itself deems necessary. There is still a particular obligation concerning information dealing with meetings of the European Council and meetings taking the form of an IGC purporting to amend the constitutive treaties of the Union. Concerning these meetings, their agenda, discussions and outcome, it is the prime minister that is obliged to inform the Grand Committee.

The constitutional obligation to inform the Grand Committee implies in practice that the Committee is given information about every Council meeting before and after the meeting. The Committee has a hearing with the competent ministers every Friday, the task being to hear ministers' statements regarding the issues to be decided at the forthcoming week's meetings of the Council. After these meetings, the Grand Committee is provided with a report of them and their results. As was already mentioned, the Grand Committee may even request information on the matters being prepared within the Union or the government may provide information of this kind on its own initiative. These matters are referred to as 'E matters' in which parliamentary approval is not obligatory. The 'E matters' have proved to be a useful instrument in relations between the government and the parliament, reflected among other things in their increasing number. As far as their substance is concerned, the 'E matters' are usually related to the pre-initiative phase of Community legislative procedure or to issues of large political importance in the Union.

The parliamentary activity in EU matters takes the normal forms of questions, interpellations, notices and reports. The number of EU-related notices and interpellations, resulting in a vote concerning the confidence of the government has, however, not been very remarkable. Until June 1999, only two interpellations had been made relating to EU matters and one EU-related notice (dealing with the Finnish participation in the Euro area) given by the government. A report given by the government to the parliament has become a common instrument when the government has been willing to leave its position on a larger EU matter to be discussed by the parliament. A report was given on the Finnish position in the 1996 IGC on EMU and on Finland and the future of Europe. Contacts between the national parliament and the EP seem to be quite modestly institutionalised in the Finnish case. The parliament is represented in COSAC by a

delegation nominated by the Grand Committee. The parliament has also employed a special representative in Brussels. He is accredited through the Finnish mission in Brussels although his office is situated in the EP.¹³ The secretariats of the Grand Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and the special representative together form the Secretariat for EU affairs of the Finnish parliament. The Secretariat is charged with co-ordinating the relationship between the parliament and the EU organs. Relations between national members of the EP and the national parliament could provide an effective link between these two organisations, but in the Finnish case, several problems have been noted in this linkage. The Parliament's relations with the Finnish MEPs are almost entirely carried out through parties and their parliamentary groups, implying that the MEPs do not have any established contacts to parliamentary committees.¹⁴ Even at the party level, contacts to their own representatives in the EP seem to be mostly arbitrary. In small parties co-operation between party organs and MEPs appears to be more systematic than in larger parties that do not seem to be so dependent upon this channel of information and impact.

Other actors: interest groups and regions

In the course of the early years of Finnish EU membership, a majority of social and political actors outside the parliamentary system began to engage, in one way or another, in EU decision-making. Their channels of influence went, however, more often directly to Brussels than to the national system of EU decision-making. Actors from the economic sector adapted themselves most smoothly to the European system owing to their existing contacts and networks. For the time being, many new actors are establishing their positions at the European level. The largest Finnish interest organisations are members of their European umbrella organisations and a great number of actors, from cities and provinces to citizen associations, have established their offices in Brussels. Many actors have even co-ordinated their representation at the European level.

Of the largest Finnish interest organisations, the Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers, which represents about 5,600 companies in the field of manufacturing, construction, transport and other service sectors related to industry, is a member of the Union of Industrialists of the European Community (UNICE) and is also represented in ECOSOC. The three largest trade unions in Finland, The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees and The Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland are all members of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and have established a common lobby in Brussels in order to promote the interests of Finnish wage-earners. The organisation representing the third main interest sector of the Finnish society, The Central Union of

Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, is a member of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Community (COPA). It is even one of the three Finnish organisations represented in the 'Various Interests Group' (III) of ECOSOC.¹⁵ In the political field membership in the Union seems to have brought about a certain division between 'EU elites' and others. A great majority of the active members of the Finnish political parties, for instance, neither engage themselves in EU matters nor have any possibility of following the information flow coming from EU institutions. In spite of the fact that the international connections of the Finnish parties are constantly increasing, most parties have joined their umbrella parties or party federations at the European level.¹⁶ Their international offices, or staff engaged in international activities, are still very modest. The parties' representations in the Finnish parliament have the best access to EU information – a situation which is largely based upon the practice of dividing the parliamentary preparation of EU issues between different specialised committees. Owing to its key position as far as contacts with the government are concerned, the Grand Committee has become somewhat of a parliamentary elite reflecting itself in its member structure.¹⁷ The Finnish regions were not very well prepared to promote their own interests in the Union. One reason for this was that the division of Finland into administrative regions and provinces did not follow the more natural division of the country into cultural or economic regions. Membership in the Union has, therefore, emphasised other regional communities than those brought about by the state. Finland participates in the Union's regional policy in the form of nineteen regional councils that are not identical with state provinces. These regional councils function as promoters of regional interests with respect to the Union and are responsible for the implementation of its regional programmes.

At the lower regional level there is still another interest organisation representing the Finnish cities and municipalities. The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities functions as their interest and service organisation in relations with the Union and provides the secretariat for the Finnish delegation in the CoR. The regional dimension is one of those sectors of Finnish political life that is going through vast changes in part owing to Finnish EU membership. Regional actors are gradually liberating themselves from the strongly centralised state system and are becoming increasingly independent actors with their own interests and identities.

Finally, the role of the Finnish media needs to be briefly discussed as an actor in Finnish EU politics. In general, the Finnish media has adopted a clearly positive attitude towards the project of European integration.¹⁸ The most important daily newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, has been the most explicit with its attitude by declaring openly a positive stand towards the issue. This importance of this attitude is further emphasised

when one takes into account the enormous educating and socialising task which the media had during the early years of Finnish membership. The media was responsible for providing ordinary people, usually unversed in the forms and details of integration, with a level of background knowledge in EU affairs. This function reflected itself in a series of textbook-style articles or programmes related to various aspects of the EU system.

Control of EU decisions

Within the Finnish judicial system (which lacks a Constitutional Court), it is the Constitutional Committee of the Parliament of Finland that has the main responsibility for constitutional control over legal acts. In this connection, another legislative peculiarity concerning the Constitution must be noted, namely the possibility for a law to deviate from the Constitution without any explicit amendments being required.¹⁹ Laws that deviate from the Constitution must, however, be predetermined through the same process as explicit amendments to the Constitution. The possibility to make deviations from the constitution without amending its text increases the flexibility of the Finnish constitution *vis-à-vis* international obligations in particular. It has also made the constitutional control connected with participation in European integration much easier. During the early years of Finnish membership the main task of the Constitutional Committee in this respect (that is, the evaluation of the compatibility of the different EU norms and treaties with the Finnish Constitution) was of a mostly technical character. Another important task which it adopted, and which evoked more political controversy, was linked with the division of political powers in Finland and to the implications of participation in European integration.

In the task of controlling the application of EU legislation, the Finnish Courts have not frequently requested a preliminary ruling to be given from the ECJ. By the end of 1998 the number of rulings requested under Article 234 (ex Article 177) was eleven. Of these, two had been requested by the Supreme Administrative Court and nine by other courts and tribunals.²⁰ The first case, in which a ruling was requested, dealt with the compatibility with Community law of the Finnish energy tax system. According to the claimant, the large Finnish energy company Outokumpu, the tax imposed on imported electricity must be treated as a discriminating tax prohibited by Article 90 (ex Article 95) ECT.²¹

By the end of 1997 Finland had appeared neither as a claimant nor as a defendant in the ECJ. The number of control procedures based upon Article 226 (ex Article 169) EC that the Commission had launched against Finland has increased year by year, as has the number of reasoned opinions given by the Commission.²² In April 1998 the Commission for the first time decided to bring Finland to the ECJ in a case linked with Natura

2000, according to the Commission Finland having not delivered a complete list of areas to join the Natura 2000 network.

Conclusion: facing challenges owing to Europeanisation

In the Finnish case it is not yet possible to make a long-term assessment of how the process towards the Union has developed and what the role of the Maastricht Treaty was in this development. It is natural that irrespective of the indicators used, the 'Europeanisation' of the political system and the administration should show a more or less linear growth since Finland became a Member State.

During the first years of membership the proper political and administrative machinery was created in Finland for the national handling and co-ordination of EU issues. The key political concerns of this process were to safeguard the role of the parliament in EU decision-making and to guarantee the effective co-ordination of the actors participating in the preparation and decision-making of EU issues at the national level. The 'Europeanisation' of the Finnish political system has reinforced the political pressures towards a change in the division of powers at the highest political level. The prime minister, as the leader of Finnish EU policy, was given a new role in Finnish foreign policy on a par with the president.

The 'Europeanisation' of administration and the huge increase in its international tasks is reflected in an increase of staff and the establishment of new administrative organs. This process has, somewhat surprisingly, been far more modest as far as other social and political actors are concerned. Interest organisations, in general, have not maintained their former positions in the political and legislative process during the EU era; even political parties still have a lot of work to do in the development of their European representations and networks. Even if the referendum held in Finland 1994 on EU membership clearly divided the Finns into two groups, the division did not constitute a permanent new dividing line in Finnish politics. A clear consensus prevails among the parties and other political elites about the advantages of integration. The political campaigns preceding the parliamentary elections of March 1999 indicated that the political preparedness to deal with European themes was still in its infancy. In the second parliamentary elections after Finland joined the Union, national themes were still prevalent.

Perspectives for the future

The Finnish road to the ever-deepening union appears to be open – at least it is not burdened with too many domestic obstacles. The general political opinion in Finland is positive towards the deepening of European integration. It is openly admitted that the national adjustment to integration has demanded a lot of sacrifices, for instance, in terms of reductions

made in the welfare state system or in supports given to Finnish farmers. However, it is usually admitted that it remains questionable to what extent these changes are a pure result of EU membership and to what extent they would have had to be effected irrespective of it. Finland's membership in the Union is an expression of the country's new political orientation, distancing itself from its Cold War heritage. This provides the framework in which its future political preparedness must be assessed.

The political debates around EMU and the 1996 IGC reveal the key elements of the Finnish preparedness for integration. From the beginning of its period in office, the Social Democrat-led Finnish government adopted a positive attitude towards the idea of Finland joining the EMU in the first round. From this stage until the summer of 1997, a majority of Finns were against this idea.²³ In spite of this critical opinion among the Finnish people culminating in heavy criticism among the supporters of particular political parties like the Centre Party, the Greens and the Left Wing Alliance, not one of the political parties was prepared to adopt a policy line that would have stood out against the government's position.²⁴ The EMU case reflected quite clearly the general political atmosphere in Finland *vis-à-vis* European integration. There are political controversies about details but no political will to question the general positive policy adopted towards the Union in general, and the deepening of it in particular. As the political debate around the 1996 IGC revealed, the Finns seem to be less prepared to go ahead with institutional changes in the Union than with other forms of deepening. The government's emphasis was clearly on the citizen issue; Finland supported the Union more strongly in issues such as the fight against unemployment and the promotion of equality between the sexes.²⁵ The openness and transparency of the Union was another important topic that was given much attention during the IGC. These were, in general, concerns that did not evoke much domestic political controversy. The main party in the opposition, the Centre Party, which takes a more reserved attitude towards integration, criticised the government for its unconditional commitment to the deepening of integration, yet this criticism was mainly directed at other issues than the citizen dimension.

Another issue where the government has taken a very positive stand, and also one of its key concerns in the IGC, relates to the development of the CFSP. In the IGC the Finnish government was in favour of increasing majority decisions in the CFSP and of the conferral of legal subjectivity to the Union. The Finnish-Swedish initiative concerning the reinforcement of the Union's capacity for crisis management was one of the highlights of the domestic debate. The domestic opposition becomes more clear-cut when it comes to second pillar questions. The issue that is most at stake is the future of Finnish military non-alignment. The Centre Party and the Greens have adopted a policy according to which decisions related to

national security should be kept on a much more national basis than the government is willing to do.

The most critical question of Finnish EU policy in the IGC, and also afterwards, seems to be connected with the institutional amendments to the Union. In its position in the IGC, the government supported an institutional status quo – being thus unwilling to change either the present division of powers between the institutions nor the structure and decision-making procedures in them. It appears evident that irrespective of the Finnish preparedness to deepen integration, the maintenance of a clear level of intergovernmentalism in the EU's decision-making still forms one of the key Finnish goals. Clear amendments, for instance, in the position of the EP or in the direction of strengthening the second pillar, would be likely to raise heavy opposition throughout the Finnish political field.

Notes

- 1 The Finnish policy was from the beginning of its EU membership firmly oriented towards taking the country to the third phase of the EMU among the first tranche of countries. This took place while Sweden and Denmark stayed outside. In the issue of EU enlargement, Finland supported the Commission's position according to which negotiations should begin with six applicants while Sweden and Denmark raised a counter-proposition about starting negotiations with all of the applicants.
- 2 According to the new Sub-section 33§a 'The Parliament shall participate in the approval of those decisions taken by international organs which according to the Constitution require the consent of the Parliament in the manner stipulated by the Parliament Act. The Council of State shall decide on the approval and implementation of the decisions covered by Subsection 1 if the decision does not require the Parliament's approval and does not because of its substance necessitate that an order is issued.'
- 3 The purpose of this process has been to unite the present four separate constitutional acts into one unitary Constitution, the text of which will be modernised. There was, however, some other political intent connected with the modification process, part of which was to cut down presidential powers.
- 4 The new Section 93, replacing the old Section 33, states that: 'Finnish foreign policy is led by the President in co-operation with the Council of State.'
- 5 See e.g. Finland's point of departure and objectives in the Union's 1996 IGC. A Report given to the Parliament by the Council of State, 27 February 1996.
- 6 See Risto Lampinen, Petri Uusikylä and Olli Rehn (eds), *EU-asioiden valmistelu Suomessa* (Helsinki: Eduskunnan kanslian julkaisu 7/1998), p. 26.
- 7 *Ibid.* pp. 118–119.
- 8 The goal of transferring the EU Secretariat to the Prime Minister's Office was even written into the programme of the government that entered into office in April 1999. The change was put into effect immediately after the Finnish EU Presidency in 2000.
- 9 See Lampinen *et al.*, 1998, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

- 10 See Niilo Jääskinen and Tiina Kivisaari, 'Parliamentary Scrutiny of European Union Affairs in Finland', in: Matti Wiberg (ed.), *Trying to Make Democracy Work. The Nordic Parliaments and the European Union* (Stockholm: The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and Gidlunds Förlag, 1997), pp. 35–36.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 12 See Lampinen *et al.*, 1998, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
- 13 See Jääskinen and Kivisaari, 1997, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- 14 See Mari Linnapuomi, 'Täällä Strasbourg, kuuleeko Helsinki? Suomalaiset europarlamentaarikot eurooppalaisen ja kansallisen tason yhteensovittajina', in: Tuomo Martikainen and Kyösti Pekonen (eds), *Eurovaalit Suomessa 1996* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Department of Political Science, *Acta Politica*, No. 10), pp. 247–257.
- 15 The other two being The Central Chamber of Commerce of Finland and The Federation of Finnish Enterprises.
- 16 The Finnish Social Democrat Party joined the Party of European Socialists in 1992; The (Conservative) National Coalition Party joined the European People's Party in 1995; The (Agrarian) Centre Party and The Swedish People's Party joined The European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party in 1995, The Green League joined the European Federation of Green Parties in 1993 and the Left Wing Alliance joined the New European Left Forum in 1991.
- 17 The Grand Committee includes the chairperson, or the vice-chairperson, of several specialised committees.
- 18 The positive attitude of Finnish journalists towards European integration has been confirmed in an academic dissertation (Tuomo Mörä, 'EU-journalismin anatomia. Media-sisältöjä muokanneet tekijät ennen kansanäänestystä 1994', Helsingin yliopisto, Viestinnän laitoksen julkaisuja 1A/2/1999).
- 19 Finland has had four separate constitutions which were unified into the new Finnish Constitution in the constitutional amendment entering into force in March, 2000.
- 20 See Statistics of the ECJ, <http://curia.eu.int/en/stat>.
- 21 Issues related to the ECJ and the control processes launched by the Commission against Finland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Legal Department, the ECJ Unit, 1995–30 June 1998.
- 22 The number of control procedures increased from five in 1996 to eighteen in 1997. The number of reasoned opinions was eight in 1997.
- 23 In 1996, only 23 per cent of the Finns were in favour of a Finnish participation in EMU whereas 45 per cent were against this policy. A fifty–fifty situation between the two opinions was achieved in the summer 1997 (the opinion polls were conducted by Eurooppalainen Suomi www.eurooppalainen suomi.fi).
- 24 The Green Party did not take a stand on the EMU question at the party level, leaving the decision to its individual members. The Centre Party and the Left Wing Alliance demanded a referendum on the issue, but took a positive stand at the party level.
- 25 See Finland's points of departure and objectives at the 1996 IGC; Report to the Parliament by the Council of State, 27 February 1996.

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