PIREDEU
Providing an Infrastructure for Research on Electoral Democracy in the European Union

Collaborative Project
Capacities Programme

Objectives and Project Overview
(version 15 February 2008)

Start date of project: 1 February 2008
Duration: 36 months
Table of Contents

I. ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................................3

II. PROJECT PARTNERS ...................................................................................................................................4

III. CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES....................................................................................................................5
   III.1 CONCEPT AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES ...............................................................................................5
   III.2 PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART .........................................................................................13

IV. SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY AND ASSOCIATED WORK PLAN ..................................................18
   IV.1 DATA COLLECTION, QUALITY AND DISSEMINATION ....................................................................18
   IV.2 OVERALL STRATEGY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION .....................................................................22

V. POTENTIAL IMPACT ..................................................................................................................................28
   V.1 STRATEGIC IMPACT .................................................................................................................................28
   V.2 PLAN FOR THE USE AND DISSEMINATION OF FOREGROUND .........................................................31

VI. THE PIREDEU CONSORTIUM .................................................................................................................33

VII. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES ............................................................................35
I. Abstract

This three-year design study will assess the feasibility of providing an infrastructure for research into citizenship, political participation, and electoral democracy in the European Union (EU). Such an infrastructure would endow the social science community with the most essential information required for a recurrent audit of the most important aspects of the electoral process in the European Union. Since elections are crucial instruments of popular control, elite accountability, and popular representation, auditing these processes is seen as good practice in a number of democracies. Such audits empirically assess the nature of electoral processes and detect challenges and threats to the quality of these processes.

The infrastructure project that we propose to design focuses on data which, if not collected at the time of an election, will either be lost or will be recorded in a manner incompatible with the way in which other relevant data have been recorded, making the complete picture unavailable for future research. At the EU’s supra-national level, democratic rules and procedures are not yet well established and the institutions of multi-level governance are repeatedly renegotiated and adapted. Auditing the quality of the electoral process at the EU-level is therefore essential. Such an audit would involve the activities of (i) parties (and candidates), (ii) mass media and (iii) voters. Scholarly evaluations of electoral processes at the EU level have been hampered until now by the lack of co-ordination in the collection of empirical information on which such evaluations are based. The current proposal seeks to change this, and to provide an infrastructure that organizes the necessary coordination and collects a comprehensive empirical database for use by the social science community interested in electoral democracy in Europe.

We will investigate the scientific and technical feasibility of such an infrastructure by means of a pilot study conducted in the context of the 2009 elections to the European Parliament.

The total costs of the project will be 3.136.000 EUR, the EC-contribution is 2.400.000 EUR.

Keywords: Empirical database, European elections, democracy, citizenship, political parties, news content.
II. Project Partners

1. European University Institute
   Stefano Bartolini (Co-Cordinator), Mark Franklin (Chairperson of the Steering Committee), Ingo Linsenmann (Project Manager)

2. Universiteit van Amsterdam
   Claes de Vreese, Wouter van der Brug, Holli A. Semetko, Marcel van Egmond

3. University of Mannheim
   Hermann Schmitt, Andreas M. Wüst

4. University of Oxford
   Sara Hobolt

5. University of Vienna
   Sylvia Kritzinger

6. Social Sciences Institute, University of Lisbon
   Pedro Magalhães

7. Central European University
   Gábor Tóka

8. University of Nottingham
   Cees van der Eijk

9. University of Exeter
   Susan Banducci

10. Trinity College Dublin
    Michael Marsh

11. Warsaw School of Social Psychology
    Radoslaw Markowski, Mikolaj Czesnik

12. Social Science Research Centre Berlin
    Bernhard Weßels

13. Institute for Public Affairs Bratislava
    Olga Gyarfasova

14. German Social Science Infrastructure Services
    Ekkehard Mochmann
III. Concept and objectives

III.1 Concept and Project Objectives

CONCEPT: What sort of infrastructure are we proposing?
This study aims at designing an infrastructure for research into citizenship, political participation, and electoral democracy in the European Union (EU). The proposed infrastructure consists of a comprehensive empirical database which will endow our user community with the most essential information required to conduct a regular ‘audit’ that would monitor/scrutinise all relevant aspects of the electoral process in the European Union. The infrastructure also consists of an organizational network that is able to co-ordinate different data collection activities, so that an integrated data base can be created. This data base would be so designed as to be accessible not only to academic researchers but also to politicians, political parties, journalists, commercial interests, and even members of civil society.

The design will take three years and will improve on the model provided by the American National Election Study (NES), a permanent infrastructure designed for the study of US elections which has, since 1948, collected and, since the middle 1960s, disseminated to the social science community survey data regarding voter opinions and choices made at the times of all Presidential and most mid-term Congressional elections.

We propose to design an integrated database encompassing not only voter surveys relating to European Parliament elections, but also candidate surveys, media studies, and collections of public record data (including party manifestos) pertaining to the conduct and outcome of the European Parliament elections which are the primary objects of our interest and concern. For members of the academic community, the proposed database will create unprecedented opportunities for cross-national research on electoral representation and behaviour, the role of the media, the emergence and transformation of party systems, and democratisation. It will enhance the attractiveness of Europe as an object of study and as an environment for comparative social science research. For other stakeholders it will open a window onto processes of electoral democracy that have hitherto remained academic and obscure.

RATIONALE: Why is this infrastructure needed?
Elections are crucial instruments of popular control, elite accountability, and political representation; therefore, the quality of democratic governance depends to a large extent on electoral processes. At EU level, democratic rules and procedures are not yet so well established as in most of its member states, and the institutions of multi-level governance undergo frequent reforms. ‘Auditing’ the quality of the electoral process at the EU-level is therefore essential. The conduct of such ‘audits’ at national level already constitute an established practice in non-European countries such as the US, Canada and Australia, and also in some European countries such as the Netherlands, the UK, Italy, Ireland, Sweden and Norway. Their aim is to assess empirically the processes of electoral democracy, detecting challenges to the quality of these processes.

In order to ‘audit’ the democratic process at European level, the relationships between the behaviour of the three main actors involved need to be investigated: the parties and their candidates for electoral office, the mass media, and the electorate. Due to the ephemeral character of human memory, relevant survey data need to be collected at the time of elections to the European Parliament. The content of news media outlets also needs to be monitored while an election is in progress or the information will be lost. Furthermore, data that is ostensibly part of the public record, relating to the programmatic promises of political parties and to the nu-
merical outcomes of European Parliament elections at the national and regional levels, have in
the past proved hard to amass once the election was over.

The data collected as part of an infrastructure of this kind needs to be compiled in such a way
as to permit not only linkages between all the elements of the infrastructure but also with
other data relating to electoral democracy – data on elite and mass behaviour such as the pub-
ic record of European Parliament debates, European legislative outputs, and the data col-
lected by other mass and elite surveys at the national and European levels. Procedures we de-
develop for linking the data held in the infrastructure itself must, as far as possible, permit these
additional linkages to be made and must, above all, permit the infrastructure to be extended to
incorporate data collected at the time of future European Parliament elections. As far as pos-
sible these procedures should also permit the integration of whatever data may exist that was
collected at the time of past EP elections.

In addition to procedures for collecting and linking the data, procedures are also needed for
making the resulting infrastructure available to the widest possible number of scholars and
other users. Indeed, an important purpose of the study is to develop data viewing software that
will make access to the data available for those who are not trained social research profes-
sionals: especially politicians, journalists, commentators, and even members of civil society;
and to those in peripheral regions without easy access to central research installations.

FEASIBILITY STUDY: ensuring the viability of the proposed infrastructure

The design of an infrastructure for studying electoral democracy in the EU will be accom-
plished in the context of a pilot study conducted at the time of the European Parliament Elec-
tions of 2009. Only by subjecting our proposed procedures to the real-world experience of an
actual EP election can we be sure that the procedures are adequate for the task. In particular,
the ability to obtain agreement of research teams from 27 countries is a critical test of feasibil-
ity which can only be conducted in a context that these teams will take seriously – the context
of a real election study. The design and feasibility studies will thus be conducted in tandem,
through the following five stages:

(1) consulting the social science research community about the research areas to be ad-
dressed;

(2) developing scientific and technical guidelines for an integrated data collection;

(3) conducting in all 27 countries a voter survey, a candidate survey, a content analysis of the
news, a content analysis of party manifestos, and a collection of the most important coun-
try statistics;

(4) validating the quality of these data;

(5) designing a cubed data structure that will enable the full integration of these various data
sources, and which will allow end users to easily access these data.

(6) The feasibility study will also provide critical evidence required for a full scientific and
technical evaluation of the proposed infrastructure to audit European democracy.

The feasibility study will have two main “products”, additional to the design itself. First, it
will produce four data sets deriving from: a candidate survey, a voter survey, a content anal-
ysis of party manifestos, and a content analysis of the news. All of these data sets will contain
contextual data. These data will be made available to the social science community who will
then be able to conduct a preliminary audit of the functioning of democracy in the EU. Sec-
ondly, a cubed data structure will be designed in which to embed the different data sets, mak-
ing them accessible to end users.
DEFINITION OF TERMS: How we use words in this Description of Work

In talking about the study of elections, voters and electoral democracy, a number of words are used with meanings specific to this area of study. Sometimes these meanings are ambiguous, as in the case of ‘election study’, which can refer to the data collected at or following an election – data that will be used as the basis for later research – or to the research that employs these data, or to both. Another ambiguous term is European Election, which can refer either to a national election conducted in a European country, or to elections to the European Parliament (which are conducted virtually simultaneously every five years in all EU member countries) or to both.

In this Description of Work we will avoid the term ‘election study’ except when referring to past research enterprises that included both the collection and use of data for research purposes. Instead, we will use the term ‘election survey’ or (more generally) ‘electoral data collection’ to refer to the activity of assembling data needed for research on electoral democracy and to ‘electoral research’ when referring to the use of those data for academic purposes. Nor will we use the term ‘European election’ except as a generic term referring to all types of elections in Europe. Rather we will refer to ‘European Parliament elections’ (‘EP elections’, for short) and to ‘national elections’ by which we mean elections to the national parliaments of EU member countries.

In designing an infrastructure for electoral data relating to European Parliament (or any other) elections it is important to distinguish between the ‘data collection instrument’ which is the blueprint determining the nature of the data to be collected (a survey instrument in the case of survey data, or a coding instrument in the case of various other types of data) and the actual data collected with the aid of this instrument at a given point in time. In addition, electoral research requires special-purpose procedures for combining data collected (even with the same type of instrument) at different points in time and (even at one point in time) collected by means of different instruments. Additionally, for any infrastructure to become really useful to academic and other users, procedures are needed that provide remote access to these data in a format desired by the user.

We will use the term ‘pilot study’ as it has been customarily used in the social sciences, to indicate the collection and analysis of data for evaluating and improving data collection instruments, though in this Description of Work we extend the meaning of the term to include evaluation of the corresponding procedures for linkage and dissemination. In much of what follows we use the term interchangeably with the term ‘feasibility study’.

Our study involves (1) the design of appropriate data collection instruments, (2) the design of appropriate procedures for linking and disseminating the data collected by means of these instruments, and (3) a pilot study to evaluate the adequacy of the resulting designs.

USER COMMUNITY: Whom should the infrastructure benefit?

Large-scale data collection enterprises conducted at the time of successive European Parliament elections will constitute an essential database for all those interested in electoral democracy in Europe: not only social scientists engaged in comparative and evaluative research on the European electoral process. Indeed, it will constitute an extremely useful infrastructure for a broad community encompassing academics from a range of disciplines, political parties, the media, and civil society. Large-scale data collection activities such as national election studies are established resources for research in a number of countries. This study intends to test the feasibility of an infrastructure ensuring the professional collection of data on electoral democracy in the European Union, guaranteeing the high quality of the data, the continuity of research in this area, and the integration and harmonization of data on voters, parties, political
elites and mass media on a European scale.

The user community concerned is a large one. It comprises an academic component and a large but unorganized set of users outside academe. The academic user community consists mainly of political scientists, but also communication scientists, political sociologists, social psychologists and political economists. As far as the political science community is concerned, perhaps as many as a thousand political scientists are members of the three major professional organizations associated with the voting and elections subfield - the Representation and Electoral Systems Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA), the Elections, Public Opinion and Voting Section of the same association, and the Elections, Parties and Public Opinion Section of the British Political Studies Association (PSA). Professional associations such as the (American) European Union Studies Association (EUSA) and the European Politics and Society section of the APSA have large numbers of members interested in these topics (the EUSA has a special interest group on Public Opinion and Participation with about 30 members). Two peer-reviewed journals (Electoral Studies and the Journal of Elections Parties and Public Opinion – both published in Britain) are devoted to the subfield, and the subfield figures largely in many general political science journals (of which the American Political Science Review, the American Journal of Political Science, the British Journal of Political Science and the Journal of Politics are top-ranking). These latter journals seldom see less than two articles focusing on this subfield in any issue. Many journals ostensibly focusing on other subfields (Comparative Political Studies, the European Journal of Political Research, European Union Politics and others) devote considerable journal space to the subfield. The subfield also figures largely in flagship political science journals in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

In a typical political science department with about ten academic staff at a European university, it would be extraordinary for there to be less than one focusing on the study of voters, parties, and elections; and the more usual number would be two or three. Large departments such as those at Oxford or Mannheim would have ten or twenty.

Other social scientists in the user community of this project include particularly communication scientists who work in the subfield of political communication, which focuses on the effects of political communications on audiences. Electoral contexts are amongst the most popular to be studied in this field, involving at least two sections in the International Communication Association: ‘political communication’ and ‘mass communication’. The infrastructure to be developed in PIREDEU is particularly relevant to this group as the field of political communication is increasingly oriented to comparative research. Important international journals in this field include Political Communication, the Communication Review, the European Journal of Communication, the Harvard International Journal of Press-Politics, the Journal of Public Opinion Research, Public Opinion Quarterly, and many national journals in the Netherlands, Scandinavian countries, Britain, and elsewhere. Although the interest in electoral processes is less central in other social science disciplines, it does command considerable attention in political sociology (particularly with respect to the linkage between elections and social cleavages) and political economy (particularly in relation to so-called political business cycles). Many social psychologists are also interested in (comparative) electoral studies as these provide ideal opportunities for studying the interaction between individual behaviour, group behaviour and reference groups, and variety in (cultural) context. Several sociology journals such as the American Sociology Review and American Journal of Sociology frequently publish in this area, as do general sociology journals from other countries.

In a typical communication science department – at least those that are part of a faculty of social or behavioral sciences – it would be extraordinary for there to be no-one studying media
or campaign effects in the context of elections. Usually two or three faculty members in a department of ten would be (at least partially) involved in this subfield. Turning to sociology departments, about one in ten members of the typical sociology department will be political sociologists.

The user community outside academe is large but diverse, and relatively unorganised. It consists of all those institutions and individuals who have a professional interest in elections and electoral processes. One segment of this extra-academic user group is centered around political parties: elected office holders, party officials, campaigners, and those working in research institutes and think tanks connected to political parties. A slightly different group consists of those representing social groups and organised interests and who equally have a stake in the outcome of elections, and sometimes in providing their members with relevant information and advice (labour unions, employers organisations, churches, sundry cause groups, formal lobbyists, etc.). Another component consists of media organisations and journalists who provide audiences (the mass audience as well as more specialised and targeted audiences) with information on elections. Finally there is a plethora of firms (mainly, but not exclusively, SME's) that cater to the rest of the extra-academic user community (market research companies, media and campaign specialists, consultancy firms, etc.).

We will consult this research community, through an open procedure, about their research needs and preferences in order to take these needs and preferences into account when designing the data collection instruments to be used in any resulting infrastructure. This same consultation exercise will form the basis for a planned procedure for consulting the user community in building and extending the infrastructure itself, and will constitute a pilot study for that procedure. In addition, we will develop procedures for collecting, processing, unifying, amalgamating, harmonizing and distributing the data that would enable researchers in a variety of subfields to directly access the data collected in the pilot study and in any future infrastructure. In this connection the pilot study will itself directly benefit the user community even as it enables us to evaluate the adequacy of the proposed designs.

The design study teams contain members of three academic disciplines: political science, sociology, and communications science. Our user community, however, extends well beyond these three academic disciplines to include economists, lawyers, historians (particularly future historians), and members of the public. To ensure widespread consultation with this user community we have assembled a group of experts representing survey researchers from every country in the EU and including representatives of the law and economics academic disciplines.

EXPERTISE: Why should we be in charge?

This design study brings together different teams experienced in investigating the behaviour of the relevant collective actors – political elites, political parties, mass media, and citizens – teams which will coordinate their activities in engaging on this study. Members of the mass survey team include political scientists, sociologists and communication scientists who have been involved in European Parliament election studies since the very first such election in 1979. The candidate survey team is the one that conducted a candidate study at the time of the 1994 European Parliament elections. The media study team is the same team which has engaged in studies of the media at European Parliament elections in 1999 and 2004. Our aggregate data collection team has extensive experience in assembling data on election outcomes throughout the EU and on other elements of the electoral context. The manifestos team has coded the programmes adopted by European political parties at all previous European Parliament elections and has close links with scholars who have studied party manifestos at the na-
tional level since the 1970s. These teams contain scholars from partner institutions in different countries of Central and Eastern Europe with whom we have longstanding collaborative experience. In addition to these teams of experienced researchers our design study gives a prominent role to members of the user community who would make use of the proposed infrastructure. Four young researchers with an impressive track record of research on national and European elections would be members the Steering Committee and of the teams involved in data collection.

We should stress that we have a large, established, user community and have longstanding working relations with one or more individuals from each and every EU member country, except for Malta which did not field a survey as part of the 2004 EP election study, and except for Bulgaria and Romania which are new EU member countries. In Malta, Bulgaria and Romania we are in the process of recruiting new collaborators some of whom have already expressed a willingness to work with us on tasks (providing country-specific questions, checking sampling frames and fieldwork plans, and verifying questionnaire translations) for which we require assistance from country specialists.

In what follows we will first briefly describe the areas of research for which this infrastructure is designed. After that, we will present the data collection activities, and define the groups that will be responsible for each of these activities. Finally, we will describe the organisational structure of this design study (which is also a prototype for the organizational structure of the new infrastructure, should it be created).

RESEARCH USES (1): Conducting academic research on elections and voters

With the recent rounds of enlargement in 2004 and 2007, twelve new members have entered the Union. Most of them (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria) are post-communist states that went through difficult political and economic transitions after 1989 - transitions whose consequences are still visible. One other new member (Cyprus) still struggles with the deep ethnic divide between its two communities.

The quality of the electoral process constitutes one of the challenges faced by the new European Union. Elections to the European Parliament were first organised in 1979 with the aim of providing a direct channel of popular control over EU policy-making. It was assumed at the time that they would also increase public interest in European politics and public support for European institutions. The progressive transfer of responsibilities from member states to the European level has not been accompanied by the development of mechanisms for democratic control and accountability, which still do not match those existing at the national level in member states. As shown by their low turnout, many European citizens view European Parliament elections as non-events – only 17% of the electorate in Slovakia and only 21% in Poland voted in the 2004 European Parliament elections. To the extent that voters participate in these elections, past research has shown that they often aim at affecting national political processes rather than European ones (Reif and Schmitt 1980, van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). In France and the Netherlands, both founding member states of the EU, a majority of voters recently turned down the EU Constitutional Treaty, raising concerns about the level of support (in those countries and elsewhere) for European integration and for further enlargement. These developments raise questions about the functioning of electoral processes in Europe (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005), particularly regarding the interaction between electoral processes at the national and the trans-national level as will be further elaborated in the next section. These concerns have been a staple research topic for political scientists, sociologists and communications scientists for many years.
Going beyond such concerns, the nature of the European Union, bringing together as it does 27 different electorates operating under a variety of electoral systems in a variety of institutional structures, and with very different histories of democratic governance (in terms of both extent and quality) provides a unique laboratory for the study of electoral and other governmental processes, as shown by the burgeoning scholarship regarding all aspects of EU affairs. The study of past European Parliament elections has provided many clues that have led to wider insights about the nature of these processes, and books such as Mark Franklin’s *Voter Turnout* (2004) and of van der Brug et al.’s *The Economy and the Vote* (2007), though having no ostensible connection with European Parliament elections, could not have been written without these authors’ prior studies using European Parliament election survey data (Franklin, van der Eijk and Oppenhuis 1996; van der Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis 1996).

Though existing data have made possible many advances, the proposed infrastructure will go much further, enabling the academic research community to explore interrelationships between the behaviour of parties, politicians, voters and the mass media at national and European levels in an integrated fashion and increasing the attractiveness of Europe as a topic for research and a venue for research activity. Within the political science sub-field of electoral studies and comparative politics, many lines of research could be investigated thanks to the establishment of the proposed infrastructure. The following constitutes a small sample, for illustrative purposes:

- the nature and quality of the representational link between EU-citizens and their representatives at the European and national levels of policy-making;
- the existence of a common European public sphere at the time of EP elections;
- the commonalities and differences among the 27 European electorates, in terms of political attitudes and electoral behaviour;
- the evolution of a European party system in the European Parliament, rather than a collection of 27 national party systems;
- the impact of EP elections on the attitudes and behaviour of European elites;
- the impact of national and European developments on party choice in EP elections;
- the impact of national and European developments on political communications in the mass media;
- the impact of national elections results on attitudes and behaviour of European elites;
- the dimensionality of political conflict at EU and national levels;
- the relative strength of national (i.e. patriotic) as compared to ideological motivations of political behaviour;
- the distinctiveness and cohesion of European Parliament party groups;
- the preconditions of mass awareness and politicisation of EU processes;
- the enabling factors for the further democratisation of EU decision-making processes.

In other disciplines (economics, law, history, sociology, social psychology, geography, communications) additional topics would lend themselves to investigation by means of this infrastructure.

**RESEARCH USES (2): Assessing the quality of democratic processes in the EU**

As already mentioned, many of the research topics addressed by political scientists and other academics employing the proposed infrastructure would be of particular interest to European politicians, to the media, and to members of civil society. These research topics concern the quality of democratic representation processes in the European Union.

The European Union is a unique transnational entity that has many of the attributes of a nation state but which is constituted by treaty between nation states which retain their individual
sovereignty. Though not endowed with formal sovereignty, the EU is nevertheless responsible for a substantial proportion of the legislation (around 80 percent) that directly affects European citizens. In ratifying various treaties enlarging the powers of the EU, national governments have ceded de facto sovereignty in many legislative areas to a supra-national entity, the Community.

EU policies are legitimised by national governments and often brought into effect by national parliaments. However, often neither national governments nor their parliaments have any real control over EU decisions which result from qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers and complex bargaining between that Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament.

While there is no ‘EU government’ as such, we can speak today of European Union governance: the process by which legislation is enacted at the European level which either takes direct effect on European citizens or which binds national governments.

In order to provide an independent route by which legitimacy could be conferred on legislation enacted at the European level (EU legislation), a European Parliament (EP) was established by the Treaty of Rome in 1958, and popular elections to this parliament were instituted in 1979. As the EP has been gradually endowed with additional powers to oversee the functioning of European governance over the last fifty years, EP elections have become increasingly important in providing a route by which the citizens of Europe are empowered to oversee the functioning of European governance.

The unsatisfactory nature of this route to legitimising EU politics is evident in the emergence of terms such as ‘democratic deficit’ and ‘crisis of legitimacy’ in regard to EU affairs (Lodge 1994; Hayward 1995), and was one motive for the attempt to draft a European Constitution, whose rejection by French and Dutch voters has already been mentioned. Popular perceptions of EP elections are largely shaped by media coverage of varying quality and performance, ranging from brief mentioning to more than a quarter of the evening news in the two weeks leading up to the elections (de Vreese et al. 2006).

Interestingly, the EU’s democratic deficit does not reveal itself in popular demands for more power to be given to the European Parliament, but rather in dissatisfaction with specific policies in fields where governments are bound by treaty obligations. Issues of migration and employment policies for national and migrant workers) serve as illustrative examples. This state of affairs even leads to calls (so far only by leaders of minor political parties) for specific countries to leave the European Union altogether.

Political and other social scientists, together with politicians and commentators, have long been puzzled by the apparent displacement of conflict over European matters from the European to the national levels of popular debate (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002; Marks and Steenbergen 2004). Many feel that the defect responsible for this displacement lies in the nature of European institutions (leading some to promote the European Constitution, as already mentioned). Others argue that the fault lies with national politicians who, by ceding power without ceding the semblance of power to the European level, confuse their electorates by leading them to believe that responsibility for European developments still lies with national political decision-makers (van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). Others, again, see a problem with national political processes for their failure to adapt to an era in which parliamentary oversight requires oversight of events in Brussels as much as of events in European national capitals (Schmidt 2006). No scholarly agreement exists either regarding the nature of the malaise or regarding an appropriate remedy.
The proposed infrastructure, beyond its innumerable applications in terms of pure science (many of which were listed earlier), will have one overriding policy-oriented application in terms of the future of European integration. It will provide the means (in terms of data linkage and data viewing procedures) for evaluating more thoroughly than was previously possible these different diagnoses and possible remedies. Indeed, our aim to develop ways to represent the contents of the infrastructure in an easily-digestible fashion will make the relevant data accessible beyond the scholarly community to the politicians and commentators most immediately concerned with the political problems of European governance and even to members of the broader European public. Proponents of different approaches to understanding the European malaise would be able to explore observable implications of their diagnoses, thus unearthing empirical and logical connections and anomalies that may lead to more connections between different ‘schools of thought’, rendering each of them less apodictical.

BEYOND THE DESIGN STUDY: Creating a permanent infrastructure

Even while this design study is in progress, efforts will be made by way of national representatives on the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures to have PIREDEU listed on the ‘roadmap’ even now being revised by this committee and in due course declared a mature infrastructure. Such a permanent infrastructure will constitute a data repository for social scientists who will employ it to monitor national and European parliamentary elections. It will be continuously updated with data collected at the time of future European Parliament (and perhaps national) elections. This repository will fulfil long-term strategic needs of stakeholders, permitting continuing research into the nature and evolution of electoral democracy in Europe and regular ‘audits’ of the adequacy of representation processes in ensuring accountability of European policymakers, legitimating public policies, and enhancing public understanding of European political processes. Once such an infrastructure exists the necessary resources for updating and extending its component data collections should be straightforward to obtain from national, private, and/or EU sources.

Among the ways in which we hope to extend the infrastructure beyond the data collected in connection with the feasibility study described above, we hope to create linkages with data of the same kind (i.e. relating to voters, elites and public record) collected at the time of national elections, and at future European Parliament elections. Data collected at the time of previous EP elections (even if less complete) should also be integrated into the data base when funding can be found. As mentioned elsewhere in this DoW we also hope to include links to data collected regarding the activities of members of the European Parliament and other elements of the public record (such as roll call votes in the EP) that lend themselves to linkage with data collected about individual candidates who later become MEPs.

Our first meeting with our user community (in the first month of the project) will be used as an opportunity to solicit a list of projects that will employ the infrastructure both in its initial and final forms and to organize national academic support for a permanent infrastructure.

III.2 Progress beyond the State-of-the-Art

There is an urgent need for the establishment of an infrastructure for European electoral research endowed with stable funding and capable of compiling, linking, disseminating, and presenting data in a co-ordinated and professional fashion. Our project would design a new infrastructure encompassing the different types of data necessary for investigating and describing the state of electoral democracy in the European Union. Such an infrastructure would contain data on the attitudes of voters, the behaviour of political parties and their candidates, the outcomes of elections, and the contents of mass media reports. These diverse data sets
need to be presented to the public in a way that is accessible not only to the academic community, but also to other stakeholders, such as journalists, policy-makers, and members of civil society.

STATE OF THE ART: The state of past European Election Studies
Notwithstanding the significant amount of research on electoral democracy in Europe conducted so far, progress in the field is still hindered by the unstructured and ad hoc manner in which data collection efforts have been organised. This is due to (1) a lack of continuity in the collection of data on the behaviour of different sets of actors; (2) problems of data quality; (3) problems of cross-national and over-time comparability of the data; and (4) problems in integrating data sources collected by different research teams that did not fully coordinate their separate activities.

Prior evaluations of European Parliament elections have been based on limited empirical information, and the state of knowledge suffers greatly from a lack of stable, centralised funding sources. Surveys are available on most European Parliament elections (1979, 1989, 1994, 1999 and 2004). However, no survey was conducted in 1984 for lack of funding. Moreover, lack of consistency of the survey instruments that were employed for these studies hinders the comparability of the data. The 1989 survey employed survey questions which differed from those used in 1979, and subsequent surveys were based on the 1989 model. However many of the questions asked in 1989 could not be repeated in later years for lack of funding. The 1999 study lacks sampling comparability with earlier studies since this study was conducted by telephone interviewing (and employed smaller samples in all but six countries). Worse, the 2004 survey was organised in a decentralised fashion with funding obtained by separate national teams. This impeded central coordination, with the result that the survey data collected in five countries are not comparable with the rest of the data, and the sampling frames are of questionable comparability even for countries in which equivalent questions were asked.

So far, research on European elections has not routinely gone beyond survey data to the wider electoral process involving candidates, parties, and the media, and such data as has been collected regarding these other aspects of the electoral process have not been collected in a centrally coordinated fashion. As a case in point, a candidate survey conducted in 1994 employed a questionnaire that differed both from the voters’ survey of that year and from the candidate survey of 1979. Candidate surveys for other election years are unavailable. A thorough audit of the functioning of electoral democracy in Europe requires that data on the attitudes of the central actors (citizens, media, parties and politicians) are collected in an integrated and coordinated fashion.

BASELINE: building on past research
This project brings together a large network of scholars who have in the past collected data at the time of European Parliament elections on the attitudes, preferences, cognitions and behaviours of the main actors involved in processes of electoral participation: voters, parties, politicians and the media. However, in previous studies no fully integrated data have resulted from the separate research projects involved, mainly because of the lack of any formal organisational network to coordinate the activities of the different research projects. Moreover, no facilities exist to provide these data to the research community in an integrated way.

Starting from this baseline, we set out to achieve three goals in this design study. First, we aim to build up an organisational infrastructure. Second, we will test in the context of the European Parliament Elections of 2009 whether this infrastructure is able to organise an integrated data collection of voters, candidates, parties and media. Third, we will design and
evaluate a tool to enable easy access by stakeholders to these data when they are presented in a ‘cubed’ fashion. Though the data collected as a test of feasibility for the design we will produce relate only to 2009, if the infrastructure becomes permanent we do hope eventually to be able to incorporate the data already collected at previous EP elections.

**ADDED VALUE (1): Components of the infrastructure**

The added value of the proposed infrastructure is that it would be specifically designed to permit access to data in EP elections in an integrated fashion, thus complementing a number of existing cross-country comparative data collections, none of which is well-suited to audit the behaviour of the main actors involved in European elections. It is innovative in that it will provide an integrated database where data on attitudes and behaviour of voters are linked to data about parties and their candidates, the media reporting they are exposed to, and the political and economic context in which all these actors operate. Linking and integrating data in this way is highly complex: no cross-country comparative study has yet created an integrated dataset of this magnitude even for a single election – much less for a series of elections. The design study intends to investigate the scientific and technical feasibility of building an integrated cross-national database on the European electorate, elites and the relevant public record, and testing this design by means of a pilot study conducted in the context of the 2009 European Parliament elections.

The proposed infrastructure would improve upon the benchmark American National Election Study (NES) in two respects. First of all, the American NES does not interview a representative sample of respondents within each of its states. In the European case it is especially important to correct this defect, as the contextual variation among the 27 member states of the European Union is substantially greater than among the American states. This variation in social, economic, historical and institutional contexts provides unique opportunities for comparative research, as already mentioned. More importantly, substantial variation in contextual characteristics will produce omitted variable bias in any analyses that fail to include measures of these characteristics, threatening the reliability and reproducibility of research findings. Secondly, the American NES only features a survey of voters, while our proposed European infrastructure comprises five types of closely related data which in the US have had to be assembled separately by each researcher, much impeding the quality and quantity of research on representation processes that can be conducted there.

The proposed infrastructure is complementary to existing databases in the social sciences. None of the existing databases combine studies on voters, elites, and political communications. Moreover, none of these databases features data on European Parliament elections, which are central in the process of interest intermediation in EU politics, and thus of critical importance for understanding European political processes and evaluating the quality of EU governance.

**ADDED VALUE (2): Complementary databases**

Our infrastructure will complement three sorts of related databases. These include firstly a number of comparative cross-national surveys focusing on the attitudes and behaviours of citizens: the European Social Survey (ESS), the European Values Studies (EVS), the World Values Studies (WVS), and the International Social Survey Project (ISSP). While these surveys, and the data collections that have resulted, are of great value, none of them are either conducted in the context of elections, nor are they designed for their study. The database we hope to design would be specifically tailored for electoral research, and the timing of the data collection activities would be scheduled accordingly.
Apart from past European Parliament election studies only a single cross-country comparative study does focus on electoral research: the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). This study consists of a standard module of survey questions added to the questionnaires fielded by a consortium of national election studies. However, the CSES database lacks coherence outside the questions of the common module, which only constitutes a minor part of each national election study. Most importantly, the CSES does not include data on European Parliament elections, and therefore does not allow for any sort of audit of these elections.

Finally, Eurobarometer is a comparative study of public opinion and perceptions in the countries of the European Union. Its comparative nature and the prolonged time span over which it has been conducted make it a remarkable resource for social science research. The Eurobarometer has been used for electoral research on two occasions due to the agency of the European Election Studies group (forerunners of the group involved in this design study), which raised funds to include a module of survey questions in special-purpose Eurobarometers fielded out of their normal (spring and autumn) sequence following the European Parliament elections in June 1989 and 1994. However, electoral processes do not constitute a focus of investigation for Eurobarometer, and it is doubtful whether relevant data would be collected in the absence of the agency of such a group.
References


IV. Scientific Methodology and Associated Work Plan

IV.1 Data Collection, Quality and Dissemination

Data Collection

Studying political representation and accountability, two concepts which lie at the root of democratic concepts of political legitimacy, requires the use of survey data. Mass surveys assess the needs and preferences of citizens, elite surveys capture the perception of these needs and preferences by candidates standing for office, and media and communication studies survey the role of the mass media in providing adequate channels of communication between the two. Public records provide two additional data sources indispensable for assessing linkages between elites and citizens: the public record of election results and of party manifestos. Given that representation is a continuing process with a number of dynamic elements, its nature and effectiveness can only be assessed and monitored on a continuing basis, where the outputs of one period are treated as inputs in the next period. Reliable findings require repeated measurements of these inputs and outputs over time.

The five sources of data for assessing the nature and quality of electoral representation processes display a contingent character. If not collected around the time of an election they become extremely difficult or impossible to recover at a later date. Citizens and elites modify their preferences rapidly, and their memories of past preferences are very unreliable – for this reason it has been found that even a three month delay in collecting relevant survey data is far too great. Media coverage needs to be recorded at the time of broadcasting, and statistics relating to election outcomes, especially those of European Parliament elections, become difficult to locate very quickly after the election is over. Other data sources pertinent to the study of electoral representation do not have this ephemeral character. The proposed infrastructure encompasses data components which, if not collected at the time of an election in a self-conscious and integrated fashion, will either be lost or will be recorded in a manner that makes it incompatible with other components. This would make the complete picture unavailable for future research.

The design study will investigate the desirability and feasibility of linking these core data components with additional data sources potentially useful for the conduct of specific research projects on electoral democracy. These will include debates in the European Parliament and the record of legislation produced by the EU. A report assessing the feasibility and desirability of such linkages in the eventual infrastructure project constitutes one of our deliverables. The ensemble of the data – those we propose to collect and those to which we propose providing linkages – constitutes the information required to assess the ‘representation paradigm’, customarily depicted in terms of the diamond shown below. Given that, in the European context, the main actors include political parties, the nodes of the diamond involve individuals, parties, elites and policies (Schmitt and Thomassen 1999).
In the case of the EU, these linkages are not easy to assess because representation does not take place only through the European Parliament, but through the channels of national elections and the representation of Member States in the EU Council of Ministers. Two-level elections involve complex cross-level contamination, which makes the unique effects at each level difficult to disentangle. Consequently, the nature of the electoral connection at each level is also difficult to ascertain (van der Eijk, Franklin et al. 1996). A lack of comparability between national and European Parliament election surveys on the one hand, and between surveys conducted after successive European Parliament elections on the other, has also created some difficulties. National election studies are only conducted in very few countries of the European Union and these studies focus on different (and often nation-specific) research questions, thus limiting their potential comparability with European Parliament election surveys. For their part, many European Parliament surveys have been small in scale due to the unavailability of funding. Finally, some surveys have not included questions asked in previous studies, thus putting at risk the integrity of long-term time-series data.

European Parliament election studies were among the first to collect data on representation processes across multiple institutional contexts. As such they have been enormously useful for increasing our understanding of the role of institutions in conditioning electoral behaviour – an important prerequisite for understanding the peculiarities of European representational processes. Indeed, the academic community has been using these data to increase their understanding of representational processes in general even as they have also been using them to try to understand the peculiarities of representational processes in the EU (Schmitt and Thomassen 1999). But these existing data are inadequate for both purposes for reasons given earlier.

One of the reasons explaining the lack of closure in the academic community on the kind of reforms needed reduce the EU’s alleged democratic deficit is a dearth of data on which to build and test theories of European governance (van der Brug and van der Eijk, 2007). The still primitive state of the art can be advanced in number of ways:

- Comparability between successive electoral data collections needs to be improved by ensuring a stable size for the component surveys (in terms of both questions and respondents) and time-series coverage of these surveys needs to be widened and deepened. This can be accomplished by preserving them from funding fluctuations;

- Coding categories for infrastructure data, concerning all the linkages involved (between public opinion and behaviour, elite opinion and behaviour, media content, and selected
content of the public record) need to be standardised so that the substantive nature of the
linkages can be tracked over time and space;

- Infrastructure data pertaining to individuals, parties, elites and the public record need to be
collected into a single structure so that they can be combined appropriately for answering
particular research questions and extended as more data become available over time;

- The existence of this infrastructure needs to be publicised so that researchers become
aware of it as a solution to their unmet needs.

- Online-information systems need to be created so that the data can be made available to
non-specialised users such as journalists, elected politicians, and other stakeholders, in-
cluding members of civil society.

Data Quality
In order to assure high quality data, a number of specific procedures will be adopted that it is
hoped will ensure against the sort of data problems that have plagued past studies of European
Parliament Elections.

An important role is envisaged in the design study (and hence in the pilot study of the 2009
EP elections) for a Data Committee which will be responsible for the overall quality and in-
tegrity of the data collected in the pilot study and for evaluating the procedures involved in
ensuring data quality in an eventual infrastructure created on the basis of our design. That
Data Committee will focus on the measurement quality of survey instruments, the quality of
the linkage mechanisms embedded in the data, the comparability of the questions asked in dif-
ferent components of the pilot study, and (in two subcommittees) the quality of the sampling
frames and of the questionnaire translations employed for the pilot study in the 27 EU mem-
ber countries. We are strongly aware of problems of sampling and translation that need to be
overcome in any study of this sort, which is why we have provided special-purpose subcom-
mittees to focus on these problems. A Deputy Chair for Data Integrity will monitor the work
of four of the workpackages to ensure comparable coding standards.

Data Dissemination
We are anxious to be able to make the data collected in the pilot study, and the data eventu-
ally included in the infrastructure that the pilot study will help us design, available to aca-
demic and other researchers in as straightforward a fashion as possible.

For some researchers this will mean the ability to download the data in conventional rectangu-
lar file format from traditional data archives, and we will make the data available in this form
in the first instance, by way of our partner institution the Central Archive in Cologne. Some of
these researchers will take advantage of the linkage variables included in those files to build
their own complex data structures using data from different components of the infrastructure
(voters and candidates, voters and media, and so on). The linkage variables included in the
data will simplify mixing and matching of the infrastructure components in this way (the data
committee will also evaluate the possibility of including front-end utilities in the final infra-
structure that would largely automate such traditional data linking, though users would still
need to ‘know what they were doing’ in order to make use of such facilities). Other academic
users will be anxious to employ the data, but will not want to learn how to link different com-
ponents of the infrastructure for analysis (even with the aid of front-end utilities). Yet others
will want to be able to view the data in terms of relationships between variables contained in
one or more components of the infrastructure, without wanting to know anything about how
data in the infrastructure are organized.
For these last two groups of users we will develop an interface to the infrastructure that permits users to define the view of the data that they wish to see (or download) in a straightforward and transparent fashion. This interface will be based on a cubed datastructure developed specifically for the purpose.

Although a considerable amount of experience with cubed data structures has been generated in the tradition of commercial data mining applications, this knowledge has to be translated and extrapolated to a social science environment in order to make it applicable to 'observatory' applications and theory-driven research involving large numbers of interrelated variables. This research into the appropriate application of existing technology will take advantage of the data produced by the pilot study to generate a 'proof of concept' demonstration datastructure, as well as heuristics and guidelines that allow trained analysts to design and build cubed datastructures themselves (which can subsequently be mounted on websites for general usage via instruments such as NESSTAR and Beyond 20/20).

An additional subcommittee of the Data Committee will plan and organize three validation sessions, intended respectively for social science academic users, for content providers to the cubed data structure, and for politicians, journalists and members of civil society. These sessions will provide 'proof of concept' by confronting untrained potential users with data from the pilot study, organized as though it were a part of the final infrastructure through a remotely accessible website. Reactions of these potential users will be carefully evaluated so as to learn as much as possible about defects in the data or its structure, or in the software designed for its dissemination. This subcommittee will also organize training workshops for potential users of the database, which will be held in conjunction with the validation sessions.

Ethical Issues: Anonymisation and Protection of Data

The pilot study for this project, and the infrastructure if funded, will contain political data. Members of the mass public will be asked for their opinions on various political issues and about their actual voting behaviour at European Parliament and national elections. However, the identities of the individuals concerned will not be stored in the infrastructure database but only on paper in a locked filing cabinet or on a password-protected computer unconnected to the internet. That file, in turn, will contain no political data, just the identification numbers of the individual respondents, as recorded in the infrastructure database. The identities of these individuals are only needed for quality control and data linkage purposes. They will never be released. And once the data have been validated and successfully linked, information about the identities concerned will be destroyed.

Members of the public will of course be asked whether they are willing to give up some of their time to be interviewed and will not be pressed if they are unwilling. Any respondent is also free to break off the interview at any time, with or without making an appointment for a follow-up session.

The pilot study, and the infrastructure if funded, will also contain data about political opinions of candidates for elected office. However, since we will only interview publicly declared candidates about the political opinions that they would report to a constituent if asked, no question of privacy arises. Candidates for public office lose certain expectations to privacy when they declare their candidacies. Our respondents will be told that they should behave as though they were being interviewed by a constituent and that they should not tell us anything they would not want a constituent to know. The names of candidates interviewed in connection with the pilot study (and with other components of the infrastructure, if funded) do need to be kept in the database since their names provide the only means for linking data collected about them with data regarding their activities (votes, speeches) collected then or later for inclusion
in the infrastructure. Such data might be collected years, even decades, after the interviews themselves.

As part of Workpackage 9 on Technical Feasibility, a protocol will be designed to secure anonymity of respondents of the mass survey and to safeguard their confidentiality. Data archives have standard protocols dealing with these matters and our design study will make use of their expertise.

Other components of the infrastructure will contain data that was always intended to be public (party manifesto data, data on the outcomes of elections, and other information that is publicly available, at least at the time of the election concerned).

The Scientific Advisory Board will have a special role in ensuring that the project keeps to these ethical standards.

IV.2 Overall Strategy and General Description

Our proposed infrastructure will consist of an integrated database for research on electoral democracy in the European Union. This infrastructure would unite materials concerning the public (mass surveys) with those required for the study of political communications (media studies), and political elites (elite surveys and party manifestos). The database would be enriched with aggregate data on the political, social and economic context in which the elections occur.

Pilot study

In a pilot study, conducted to evaluate the proposed design, we would make a trial collection of all of the relevant types of data in all 27 EU member states. The trial surveys and media studies would be conducted at the time of elections to the European Parliament in 2009. If the infrastructure project were to be funded, this pilot study would be transformed into the first component of the proposed infrastructure, which would then be enhanced at five-year intervals with data collected at the time of subsequent European Parliament elections. We need to include all countries in the pilot study because the unique peculiarities of each country could potentially derail the actual infrastructure project if not evaluated before the design is finalized, and because the difficulties of achieving agreement between teams of scholars from different countries on the content of the questionnaires becomes exponentially more difficult with the inclusion of each additional country. Each country presents peculiarities that its scholars deem worthy of special investigation, but the surveys need to be identical across all countries making for major difficulties in designing instruments that take adequate account of country differences while retaining the comparability permitting powerful comparative research. In order to take into account such peculiarities, the relevant data for each country needs to be collected at the time of a real election.

Workpackages

The infrastructure will be organised around the five data collection activities (surveys of citizens, surveys of elites, contents of party manifestos, contents of news, and contextual data). As explained in the section on management, five groups will be responsible for designing instruments for the collection of each of these types of data and for testing these instruments during the pilot study. Membership of these groups and their exact responsibilities will be finalized following a kick-off conference at the European University Institute during the first months of the study (WP2). Each group will be an international group composed of members from different institutions based in different countries and will be responsible for one of the 5 workpackages (WP3-7). Each of these workpackages will finish its work with a final report to
the Steering Committee and Data Committee (see below) which will feed into the final reports of those committees, in turn feeding into the final report on the feasibility of creating a new infrastructure (WP10, see below).

Collecting and integrating infrastructure data requires coordination both at the scientific and technical levels. We will design an open procedure that allows the social science community to propose specific survey questions or coding categories to be included in the infrastructure,
ensuring flexibility in exploring new areas of research. This procedure will be employed during the design study to consult the user community on research questions for the pilot study. A Steering Committee will build on these consultations to determine the lines of research to be studied within the pilot study, and will evaluate the implementation of research requirements by the groups responsible for the data collection. It will also evaluate the consultation procedure itself and the methods employed to develop a specific set of research instruments on the basis of this procedure. This will constitute a separate workpackage (WP8). WP8 is the responsibility of the Steering Committee, which consists of members of all five teams and a number of other eminent scholars in the field, including four members of the user community. The Deputy Chair of this committee (Sara Hobolt from Oxford University) will have particular responsibility for project integration. She will chair a joint subcommittee of the Steering and Data Committees which will be in charge of monitoring progress with different workpackages, and of facilitating communications between WPs regarding potential differences in data standards. In this regard she will work closely in this joint subcommittee with a member of the Data Committee having special responsibility for data integrity (see below).

A workpackage regarding technical aspects of the infrastructure will be organised in WP9. This involves planning the integration and harmonization of data before these are collected, organising the post-processing and linking of the data, and making the data accessible to all stakeholders. The Data Committee, consisting of members of the five teams and our partner data archive, is entrusted with WP9. Subcommittees of the Data Committee will be concerned with data quality. Specifically, a subcommittee on sampling and a subcommittee on translation will concern themselves with the quality of the sampling procedures used in the pilot study and with the adequacy of questionnaires translated into languages other than English. The subcommittee on sampling will have access to advice from statistics departments in the consortium member institutions (and will include the Director of the Methods and Data Institute at the University of Nottingham who also chairs the Data Committee). The subcommittee on translation will have direct access to survey professionals in the 27 member states of the EU who are members of our user community. The Deputy Chair of this committee (Susan Banducci from Exeter University) will have particular responsibility for data integrity. Having membership in all the data collection WPs except for WP7 (whose integration is assured by the Chair of the voters team – q.v.) she will be in a unique position to ensure that the data as collected and coded is as compatible as possible across WPs. She will be a leading member of the Joint Subcommittee on Project Integration (see above).

A separate workpackage is devoted to project management (WP1). The main tasks of this workpackage is to issue a tender for the conduct of the fieldwork for the pilot study, and to ensure that the different groups responsible for the separate workpackages complete and furnish the reports and data that are the project’s deliverables. The Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute, whose director is the Official Coordinator of the Design Study responsible for all communication with the European Commission, is in charge of WP1.

Two workpackages mark the beginning (WP2) and the conclusion (WP10) of the design study. WP2, as already mentioned, will organize a kick-off conference where the details of the workpackages and of the responsibilities of individual members of the various teams will be finalised and responsibilities discussed. WP2 will also be responsible for organizing consultations with the user community and the initial conference of members of that community. WP10 will organise the design study’s closing conference when members of the user community will be invited to present papers employing data collected in the pilot study. These papers will provide one of the grounds on which WP10 will evaluate the instruments and procedures employed in the pilot study, and the quality and utility of the resulting data. WP10 will also
organize three validation sessions relating to the prototype infrastructure access facilities, in order to provide ‘proof of concept’ for the design of these facilities. On the basis of these evaluations, WP10 will write the study’s final report evaluating the technical, financial, and scientific feasibility of founding a permanent infrastructure.

In addition to the teams and workpackages described above, we will appoint a Scientific Advisory Board that will oversee the integrity of the design study and serve as a prototype Advisory Board for the infrastructure itself, if funded. The Scientific Advisory Board would consist of senior scholars who would nevertheless be users of the infrastructure. Jacques Thomas-sen, Professor of Political Science at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, has agreed to chair this Board whose other members would include Pippa Norris (from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, currently on secondment to the United Nations), Liesbet Hooghe, from the Free University of Amsterdam and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Max Kaase from the University of Bremen (Chair of the Supervisory Board of the European Social Survey).

A total of 38 deliverables are foreseen in the ten workpackages. The following sections provide more details on the nature of these deliverables and the timetable for their provision.

**Milestones**

In order to monitor progress in this design study, it has a number of milestones, as follows.

*Milestone 1* (month 3): This is a report that elaborates details of the work to be done and responsibilities of partner institutions beyond what is detailed in this Annex to the point where partners have a detailed plan of work that will produce the deliverables listed below.

*Milestone 2* (month 6): This milestone consists of two reports. In one report the scientific steering committee will provide the different teams with clear guidelines on the research topics that must be addressed in the various data collection activities. In the other report, data committee provides the different teams with clear technical guidelines for organising an integrated data collection. This milestone forms the basis for the further (also technical) activities of the teams, such as the design of questionnaires, coding schemes for content analyses, using the same lists of parties and media outlets in the different studies, and giving each the same unique identification coding.

*Milestone 3* (month 24): This milestone consists of the reports on the quality of the citizen survey data and of the candidate survey data after these data are collected. Before the data can be delivered to the potential users, they have to be cleaned and the quality needs to be as-essed. At the time of this report, these activities need to have been completed.

*Milestone 4* (month 27): This milestone consists of the reports on the quality of the content analyses of the media and of the party manifestos, as well as of the contextual data. Before the data can be delivered to the potential users, inter- and intra-coder reliability needs to be as-essed and the quality of the data needs to be ascertained. At the time of this report, these activities need to have been completed.

*Milestone 5* (month 28): This is a report on the suitability of the data collected by the various workpackages for its purpose of supporting an audit of electoral democracy in Europe.

*Milestone 6* (month 29): This is a report on the design of the cubed data structure that will be developed to disseminate the data in a user friendly way.

*Milestone 7* (month 30): This is a report on data dissemination.
Milestone 8 (month 35): This milestone consists of two reports. One is an evaluation – from the perspective of the scientific community and other stakeholders – (in the light of two conferences involving the user community) – of the added value of the database. The other report evaluates – on the basis of the user conference, the validation sessions, and of reports from WP3 to WP7 – the technical qualities of the database that was created. Moreover, it will evaluate the feasibility of expanding the data collected in the pilot study by linking it to other – exiting – studies, such as prior European Elections Studies, Eurobarometers, prior media studies and prior candidate surveys, and to data collected in other scholarly enterprises such as legislative behaviour studies and policy studies. This report will also evaluate the technical feasibility of implementing the ‘cubed data’ viewing software and of extending the infrastructure over time with the addition of data for future EP elections. Both reports serve as the main inputs into the final conceptual design report.

Risks and Contingencies

No significant known risks apply to the feasibility study. Things that go wrong with the organizational effort or pilot study will feed into the report on the feasibility study and be useful in designing the infrastructure that we envision. Moreover, these reports will help future decision-makers decide whether or not to fund an infrastructure of this kind. In regard to the pilot study the usual risks apply that apply to all survey research. Though bad samples are rare, they do occur, but our exposure to this risk is limited by the number of samples we propose to draw. If one of them is bad this will not impact the pilot study as a whole. Similarly, there is a risk that partner institutions (and particularly subcontractors) will not work precisely to specification. There will be strong checks on partner institutions (provisions will be made in the Consortium Agreement), but subcontractors are beyond our control, other than by the agreements laid down in a contract. However, we will work only with a reputable survey agency, and we will carefully check its credentials. Even if this agency has trouble with its own subcontractors, this would be unlikely to affect more than one out of 27 samples. Though a survey agency may occasionally have trouble with one of its subcontractors, it is unheard of in modern times for a reputable agency to simply fail to conduct the survey they have been contracted to conduct. Absent such a failure, other known risks constitute minor contingencies that will not impact either the design or its feasibility study.

Of course there is always the unexpected. One role of the Steering Committee will be to identify and evaluate unexpected developments, in case they should constitute a risk to the outcome of the study, and to develop appropriate responses to any such contingencies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workpackages</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WP1: Management</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Website for PIREDEU Study (D1.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Tenders for network and negotiations (D1.2, D1.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Overall Organisation and Management, including reports (D1.3, D1.5-6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 4: Final plan for the use and dissemination of foreground (D1.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP2: Starting Up Design Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Elaboration of details and responsibilities (D2.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP3: Design I: Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Development of questionnaire for voter study (D3.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Validation of voter questionnaires (D3.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Assessment of voter data quality (D3.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP4: Design II: Candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Questionnaire for candidate study and report (D4.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Validation of candidate questionnaires (D4.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Assessment of candidate data quality (D4.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP5: Design III: Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Codebook for content analysis and results (D5.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Validation report content analysis and results (D5.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Assessment of media data quality (D5.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP6: Design IV: Manifestos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Codebook for content analysis manifestos (D6.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Validation report content analysis manifestos (D6.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Assessment of manifesto data quality (D6.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP7: Design V: Virtual data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Contextual data to be collected (D7.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Assessment of contextual data quality (D7.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Evaluation of Technical Feasibility and Design (D7.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP8: Scientific Steering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Scientific guidelines for data collection (D8.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Scientific evaluation of proposals for data collection (D8.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Report on Data Suitability (D8.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 4: Conference: auditing electoral democracy in the EU (D8.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 5: Scientific evaluation of design study (D8.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP9: Technical Feasibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Technical guidelines for data collection (D9.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2: Technical evaluation of proposals for data collection (D9.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3: Design of the Ceded Data Structure (D9.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 4: Post-processing and Dissemination of data within the design study (D9.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 5: Technical evaluation of design study (D9.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP10: Concluding Design Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1: Conceptual Design Report (D10.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: deliverables: ●, deliverables as milestones: ○.
V. Potential Impact

V.1 Strategic Impact

The conceptual design report, the final deliverable of the study, will serve the crucial function of helping policy-makers and their advisors to evaluate and prepare for strategic decisions regarding the development of new research infrastructures of European interest. This report is what the entire study is designed to produce, and the impact of the report would be on making possible the implementation of an infrastructure for research into citizenship, political participation, and electoral democracy in the European Union (EU). Such an infrastructure is by definition a Europe-wide enterprise that can only be built on a European scale, requiring a European approach and European funding (see below).

Though it would complement other data collection enterprises (as mentioned in 1.2 above), if designed and implemented, such an infrastructure would be unique in making possible research into citizenship, political participation, and electoral democracy in the EU that would benefit not only European scholarship but the global community of those who study democratic governance in general, and particularly in Europe. The infrastructure would make possible research projects that are at present either difficult to envisage or not feasible with currently available tools. The capability to address such projects would hugely increase the attractiveness of the European Research Area in this subfield. Importantly, the outcomes of those projects would not only be of scholarly interest but it will have substantial practical importance for the conduct of European governance.

The conferences in which we involve our user community and stakeholders will increase the visibility of the proposed infrastructure, as will publications emanating from this conference, ensuring that the user community is ready to take advantage of the new infrastructure, should it come into being.

Apart from making the infrastructure possible, our design study will have more immediate impact. Because it would be impossible to finalize a design for the infrastructure in question without subjecting it to a real-world test, it is necessary to conduct a pilot study at the time of an actual election to the European Parliament. Such a pilot study, intended primarily to make us aware of the difficulties associated with this enterprise, will itself impact scholars and practitioners in some of the same ways in which we expect the intended infrastructure itself to impact these worlds. In what follows we describe the potential impact of the planned infrastructure, much of which will already be felt on a smaller scale as a result of the design study itself.

The proposed infrastructure will constitute a data repository for social scientists who will employ it to monitor national and European parliamentary elections. It will be continuously updated with data collected at the time of future European Parliament (and perhaps national) elections. This repository will fulfill long-term strategic needs of stakeholders, permitting continuing research into the nature and evolution of electoral democracy in Europe and regular ‘audits’ of the adequacy of representation processes in ensuring accountability of European policymakers, legitimating public policies, and enhancing public understanding of European political processes.

The primary stakeholders impacted by the infrastructure include academic researchers, government officials and elected representatives, the media and various commercial enterprises with interests in European public policy. These stakeholders will transmit an impact of the infrastructure to civil society in an indirect way, but civil society will also be impacted more
directly as will be explained. In the following paragraphs we will evaluate the impact of the infrastructure on each of these groups, in turn.

**Academic Stakeholders**

In the academic disciplines of Political Science, Economics, Communications Science, and Sociology, the study of representation processes has a high profile in various subfields such as political behaviour, political sociology, political economy, social movement studies, elite studies, economic sociology, and economic and political history. These subfields require accurate, extensive, and cumulative time-series data on representation processes such as the five linked data collections that constitute our infrastructure. These highly-structured collections will be made available by means of electronic dissemination of a radically innovative kind, permitting remotely controlled management of the data and its virtual restructuring. This will allow stakeholders to create customized views and download customized subsets required for specific research needs.

The data management facilities would permit universal access by interested scholars, thus helping to integrate those who study European democracy into a common virtual community. This infrastructure will contribute to the upgrading of European research facilities, and will become a resource of preference for researchers throughout the world interested in representation processes. It will drive changes in the way scientific research is conducted in these subfields.

Moreover, the data management facilities which will be created for the design study represent a software solution for the management of social science data whose prospective applications extend beyond the infrastructure for which it is designed. Data archives are constantly improving the means by which users may access the data in their repositories, and they will have the opportunity to adopt software solutions pioneered in our design study. Equally, the sophisticated data-cubing and other technologies that will be pioneered for the data management facilities will benefit software engineering in data archives, with possible consequences for yet an additional academic discipline: computer science.

Some of the questions that academic stakeholders will be able to address with the aid of these data, many of them pertaining to the quality of electoral democracy in Europe and making possible an ‘audit’ of its evolution, were listed earlier in this Description of Work and will be referred to again below.

**Government Stakeholders**

One of the prime consumers of academic studies of governmental representation processes is government itself. The European Parliament has already demonstrated considerable interest in the ‘European Democracy Observatory’ (EUDO), located at the European University Institute and future host of this proposed infrastructure. Elected representatives have a major stake in the quality of representation processes since they can maximise their chances of re-election by satisfying their voters’ expectations.

European Parliament representatives are particularly concerned about the supposed ‘democratic deficit’ in Europe, whose illumination and possibly alleviation will be facilitated by this infrastructure project. The party groupings of the European Parliament will benefit from the infrastructure as they will be able to assess the degree of diversity/similarity of the electorates of their member organisations across countries, what political demands these parties face in their homelands, what profile the member organisations offer in the different Member States, and so on.
The Commission has an interest in monitoring public opinion on European policies and developments, and maintains a continuing survey research capacity (the Eurobarometer) for this purpose. However, the Eurobarometer is an inadequate instrument for determining reasons for dissatisfaction with representation processes. Asking citizens about their concerns does not provide a satisfactory answer to such questions. Such an answer can exclusively be provided by theory-driven scholarly research into the determinants of public preferences, requiring data that extend beyond knowledge of public opinion.

National governments also have a major interest in European representation processes. The largest political threat to economic well-being in certain countries at the present time is the growth of support for withdrawal from the EU. A deep understanding of the appeal of anti-European policies and support for Euro-sceptic parties is thus of prime importance. The proposed infrastructure will contribute decisively to illuminating these matters by supplying politicians with an ‘audit’ of the quality of electoral processes as explained earlier.

Media
Radio, television and newspaper journalists have a constant need to access information about the political situation, the strength of political preferences, the support for political policies and ideas, the strategies of political parties and candidates, and the impact of those strategies. This information often makes news in itself: sometimes it provides necessary background for news stories. Much conventional wisdom about European Parliament elections, representation processes, and the alleged democratic deficit is fuelled by academic research retailed by reporters and commentators. Reporters obtain this information either from popular academic publications or by interviewing academics. The quality of the information imparted to the public depends on the quality of the knowledge and understanding of academics who study these matters. Until now, news media have been restricted to making use of second-hand information. The proposed infrastructure, however, will be accessible to the public in general, thereby allowing reporters and especially commentators and analysts to be among the most strongly impacted groups. The opportunity to directly access information regarding the bases for EP election outcomes, in order to discover basic facts, should greatly improve the quality of reporting and analysis on European political developments. These uses of the infrastructure data will thus improve the knowledge available to the general public in these important areas.

Commercial stakeholders
In addition to the news media, we expect commercial organizations, and especially their professional associations, to make use of this source for background information on election outcomes, party support, and party policies. Trying to anticipate possible future legislative developments is an important part of risk assessment exercises regularly conducted by commercial enterprises with interests in international capital flows, transnational investment, and international trade, many of which are SMEs. The data contained in the infrastructure repository will be useful for elaborating and testing scenarios regarding future policy developments and, in this way, could have considerable impact on economic decision-making by increasing the transparency and predictability of EU policymaking.

Civil Society
As already mentioned members of civil society will be impacted indirectly by media reports of academic findings and also by research conducted by reporters and commentators employing the infrastructure interface that we propose to develop. But members of civil society will also have direct access to this infrastructure by means of the same interface. Therefore, they
will be able to assess for themselves the quality of democratic representation in Europe, to the extent that their sophistication and knowledge permits.

In particular, a variety of civil society organizations are directly affected by representation processes and the adequacy of democratic accountability. Non-governmental organizations such as International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) will certainly access data from the infrastructure as a basis for research and assessment exercises that they conduct for a variety of purposes. Moreover, regular interest groups representing commercial and private interests of all kinds will find the repository to be a valuable resource in assessing support for political initiatives and opposition to existing policies. Such organizations provide a second route by which the infrastructure will have indirect impacts on civil society, in addition to the routes provided by the news media.

Funding agencies
The design study will be used to provide supporting arguments as we approach funding agencies for permanent support of the data collection programme envisioned for the PIREDEU infrastructure. Having demonstrated the feasibility of such an enterprise it will be easier to obtain such funding from national and EU sources.

V.2 Plan for the use and dissemination of foreground
Two conferences are foreseen; at one of these initial findings of research conducted by members of our user community, employing data collected for the project’s pilot study, will be presented. This conference will raise awareness of the existence of the trial infrastructure (produced as a by-product of the design study) and initial awareness of plans for a permanent and much enlarged infrastructure along the same lines. Partly on the basis of this conference, and partly on the basis of research conducted by users of the trial infrastructure, we expect an impact on academic knowledge and understanding. Equally important, we expect to increase the visibility of Europe as a venue for research on matters pertaining to electoral behaviour, electoral representation, the role of the media, the emergence and transformation of party systems and democratisation. This will increase the attractiveness of this venue as an environment for comparative social science research.

Exploitation of the study’s results will arise primarily from employment of the infrastructure, if it is created, by the various groups listed above. At the outset of this Description of Work we listed some of the research questions that such an infrastructure would allow the academic community to address. But the actual number of questions that could be listed is almost infinite, and will evolve over time. A new research facility generates new questions as scholars come to see how ideas that had lain dormant might be investigated with the new facility. As ideas are investigated and new conclusions reached so new ideas are spawned and new research questions are formulated, very quickly going far beyond anything that the originators of the database could list and very likely beyond those they could even imagine, given the current state of knowledge. This is why the open procedure of consultation will be so important for the new facility. It is impossible to tell where these new ideas might arise or whose ideas they might be. An infrastructure that belongs to the entire research community will hugely stimulate that community. The proposed infrastructure could do for social scientists something like what the Hubble space telescope did for astronomers. For them the vistas opened up were literally vast in terms of millions of light years. For the social sciences new vistas will not encompass light years of space, but advances in terms of theory and knowledge might well be just as great. That is what an infrastructure is for.
The cubed and relational database viewing facilities which will be a major product of this design study would greatly facilitate such developments among social scientists, but they will also have value far beyond the social sciences. Not only will they provide a means for viewing social science data in a straightforward fashion by non social scientists but also for viewing business and other sorts of data. Every effort will be made to ensure the appropriate exploitation of this technology by those who might find it useful.

Going beyond academe, we expect our design study and the pilot study conducted as a means for its evaluation, to have a strong impact on stakeholders in politics, business, and civil society as already explained. Again every effort will be made to ensure appropriate dissemination of results and findings. Maximum use will be made of the internet for publicity and dissemination purposes among the user community. Indeed we plan for the internet to be the mechanism by which the cubed and relational data-structure will be made available to users.
**VI. The PIREDEU Consortium**

The participants in the design study have been carefully assembled so as to constitute a compact and effective consortium capable of achieving the design study’s objectives. We have deliberately kept the number of consortium member institutions to less than fifteen so as to facilitate efficient communications. The individual scholars listed above in 2.2 and 2.3 are political scientists, sociologists and communications scientists almost all of whom are well-acquainted with each other as a result of at least ten years of collaboration on European Parliament election studies. Some of the younger scholars participated, a decade ago, in the EU-funded TMR network for electoral research in Europe which organized four winter schools between 1998 and 2001 that were taught by (among others) Anne Marie Aish (now as then at the University of Louvaine La Neuve), Cees van der Eijk (now at Nottingham), Mark Franklin (now at the EUI), and Michael Marsh (now as then at Trinity College, Dublin). Others are known to senior members of the study as a result of conference attendance and other professional links. The junior scholars are similarly integrated with each other, though they do not necessarily know (and are not necessarily known by) all the senior members of the study.

One incidental objective of the design study will be to groom younger members of the study for future leadership roles in collecting data for the infrastructure (if funded) and in other future research activities. Specific leadership roles are envisioned for Dr. Susan Banducci (Exeter University) and Dr. Sara Hobolt (Oxford University) in ensuring data integrity and project integration, respectively.

Those in leadership roles in the different committees and teams all have appropriate experience in data collection activities similar to those they would help to design as part of this study. Franklin has been engaged in election studies since the 1980s and has served on the supervisory boards of both British and French election studies. He has been closely involved in studying European Parliament elections since 1989 when he was in receipt of a major grant from the British ESRC to help fund an election survey to study that election. Van der Eijk has been Principal Investigator of Dutch and EP election studies since the early 1980s; Schmitt has directed German and EP election studies since the 1980s, and in 1994 was in receipt of a major grant from the German National Science Foundation to fund a large part of the EP election study conducted that year; van der Brug has been Principal Investigator of Dutch and EP election studies since the 1990s; Marsh has directed Irish and EP election studies since the 1990s. Turning to elite studies, Weßels directed the 1994 EP candidate study and Schmitt directed the collection of manifesto data in 2004 and earlier. With regard to media studies, de Vreese and Semetko have between them directed such studies in Denmark, Netherlands, Germany and the United States, and during two previous EP elections.

The consortium is well-balanced in terms of its contributions to the study, with the largest contributions coming from institutions with the largest number of participating scholars (the EUI, the University of Amsterdam, and Mannheim University). The work of these institutions is augmented by other consortium members as necessary to provide specific expertise and skills. The consortium is augmented by individuals from our informal partner institutions, all of whom played important roles in fielding the 2004 EP election study and all of whom have experience in conducting studies within their own countries.

The consortium members will each be responsible for their own distinct components of research and for their share of Work Packages that encapsulate their objectives and deliverables. They will be expected to maintain regular contacts with, and to report to, team leaders/chairs and through them to the Consortium Steering Committee and management team. Every effort will be made to ensure that this is a dynamic and mutually rewarding process.
The participation of women in all forums and at all levels will be ensured. This applies in particular to the management structure, but also to the membership of the research teams, the distribution of the work packages among partners and to the composition, of the team of national experts. We have also involved women at different levels of seniority: researchers in the early stages of their careers as well as prominent senior professors. Two female researchers, Dr Susan Banducci (from Exeter University) and Dr Sara Hobolt (from Oxford University) take on senior positions in the Steering Committee, as Deputy Chair of Data Integrity and Deputy Chair of Project Integration respectively. The study’s administrative structure has been designed so as to provide opportunities for junior female academic faculty to occupy positions of responsibility especially concerning the integration of efforts within and between work-packages. We intend for these positions to provide opportunities for ‘grooming’ the women concerned for future leadership roles.

The consortium consists of two layers. The topmost layer, on which we have focused so far in this Description of Work, consists of 14 institutions in ten countries which are formal partner institutions in this consortium. An additional 18 institutions in 17 additional countries are part of an informal partnership that contains known members of the proposed infrastructure’s eventual user community. Though they will not sign the consortium agreement, will spend no EU funds, and will contribute only days rather than months to the work of the consortium as a whole, these informal partners are of great importance to the design effort since they will help to guarantee the quality of data collected in the pilot study by checking the sampling frames and translations intended to be used in their countries, and by attending (and recruiting other interested scholars to attend) the three conferences at which the user community will be included. These collaborators contributed to the 2004 European Election Study and most of them have already agreed to continue in 2009. We have new collaborators for Spain, Austria, Bulgaria and Romania, and are in the process of identifying one in Malta (which was absent in the last study). This wider circle of informal partners will communicate directly with the project management team at the RSCAS and with coordinators of the data collection teams when their input is required.

Taken together this is an extraordinary group of scholars spanning all levels of seniority within the political science, communications science, and sociology disciplines, and commanding tens of decades of cumulative experience in conducting studies that have produced data of the kind that would be included in the infrastructure we plan to design.
VII. Management structure and procedures

The design study will be managed as a Consortium based on a Consortium agreement which will be agreed upon before the commencement of the contract. The EUI as the co-ordinating partner for the Consortium will draw on and strengthen its managerial capacity for the benefit of the Consortium and to ensure close liaison with the European Commission at all stages of the Project.

Scientific direction and management

The European University Institute (EUI), from a base in the Robert Schuman Centre (RSCAS) will anchor the management of the project, with Mark Franklin, Professor of Political Science at the EUI, as chair of the Steering Committee, working closely with a core team of colleagues at the EUI, including Stefano Bartolini, the director of the RSCAS and chairperson of the Consortium’s General Assembly. Both bring a depth of experience and expertise in managing cross-national and cross-disciplinary programmes and projects. They have close knowledge of the operating requirements of the European Commission, as well as of national funding agencies and of projects directly commissioned by the practitioner community. This team will be in close contact with Sara Hobolt at Oxford University, who will serve as the deputy chair of the Steering Committee, with special responsibility for project integration, supported by a Research Assistant, and will chair a Joint Subcommittee for Project Integration – a joint subcommittee of the Steering and Data committees.

Professor Franklin will be assisted by a half-time project manager, who will be responsible for the daily management of the project. The project manager should bring a combination of managerial skills and scientific know-how to the management of the Consortium, and should liaise regularly with all partners, and in particular the Work Package leaders, ensuring that work progresses to schedule, that deliverables are produced, and that appropriate periodic reporting is carried out. The project manager will be supervised by Dr Mei Lan Goei, Academic Administrator of the RSCAS, who herself has a PhD in political science with a focus on electoral research and brings additional experience from managing research projects in the Netherlands.
This management team will provide continuous management over the full duration of the project, taking charge of collective activities for the Consortium, maintaining close liaison with the data collection team leaders, and administering the budget for management costs and the budget for ‘collective goods’ (primarily the surveys of voters and elites).

This team will draw on further support from: the Research Administration of the EUI (including support for financial management of the Consortium); the administrative team of the RSCAS; the publications and web unit of the RSCAS; and the Conference Unit of the RSCAS where relevant for organising Consortium meetings. The staff of the Robert Schuman Centre (RSCAS) has long-standing experience managing projects with European framework programme funding and in partnership with many institutions elsewhere in Europe. They will draw on this experience in anchoring the work of the Consortium. Serena Scarselli leads the Research Administration Unit, which comprises an experienced team well conversant with the operations and requirements of the European Commission’s Framework Programme. This team will provide continuous support to the Consortium.

**Consortium Steering Committee**

A Consortium Steering Committee (SC) has been established, composed of: the representative of the co-ordinator (normally Professor Mark Franklin), who will chair the Committee; Dr. Sara Hobolt as Deputy Chair of the SC responsible for project integration, one representative of each instrument design team (normally one of the named Work Package leaders); four members of our user community (Professor Gabor Toka of the Central European University, Dr. Pedro Magalhaes of the University of Lisbon, Dr. Olga Gyarfasova of IVO Bratislava, and Professor Sylvia Kritzinger of the University of Vienna); Professor Bruno de Witte (Law Department, EUI), as ‘legal adviser’; and Professor Richard Spady (Economics Department, EUI) as ‘economic adviser’ and representative of potential users in the economics community of scholars. Gyarfasova, Toka, and Markowski will play a special role on the Steering Committee as our advisers on special problems arising with the Central and Eastern European countries. The Steering Committee will be responsible for the general co-ordination of activities across the different Work Packages; the development and delivery of the research projects and of supporting dissemination and training activities; the co-ordination of periodic reports to be delivered to the Commission; making proposals to the partners for review and/or amendment of the terms of the contract; and taking initiatives (should they be needed) to replace ‘defaulting’ partners or to block payments to defaulting partners.

The Steering Committee will meet in conjunction with the opening and closing conferences and additionally one time in between. Otherwise, it will hold virtual meetings and consult electronically. We intend that decisions will as far as possible be based on consensus among the members of the Committee, although decisions may be reached by a majority of members and, in the case of decisions by written procedure, members will be given 14 days to question any proposed action that has been circulated. All members of the Steering Committee may table items for discussion, and any individual partner may bring an issue to the attention of the Steering Committee. The precise details of these and other ‘constitutional arrangements’ will be defined in the PIREDEU Consortium Agreement.

**Team leaders**

The Consortium has a devolved management structure which allocates important intellectual and managerial responsibilities to team leaders. The ten work packages are grouped into three data collection teams and three supervisory committees. The data collection teams are responsible for mass behaviour (WP3 and WP7), the media study (WP5), and elite behaviour (WP4 and WP6). The three supervisory committees are responsible for Steering (WP2, WP8 and
WP10), Data (WP9), while the EUI as co-ordinator is responsible for the Management Work Package (WP1). Team and committee leaders/chairs have been selected on a mixture of intellectual and managerial criteria.

Each team leader has direct responsibility for managing the Work Packages which are responsibilities of that team. They will be the first point of contact for team members for both intellectual and management issues. They will ensure that WP teams work to the shared intellectual template and overall scientific guidelines established following the kick-off conference. They will advise and monitor projects so as to ensure that objectives are met. They will represent the team in the Steering Committee and strengthen the complementary oversight mechanisms for the Consortium. They will liaise with each other to promote cross-team coherence. They will maintain regular contacts with the Steering Committee and its project coordinator. WP leaders who are not team leaders will also be members of the Steering Committee.

Advisory Board
The Steering Committee will appoint an Advisory Board of four independent and experienced experts to provide an external monitoring role for the benefit of the Consortium so as to check the quality of the work of the Consortium and to provide periodic advice to the Consortium. Two of the Monitoring Group’s members have been selected, and we are awaiting confirmation of a further two. The two are professors Jacques Thomassen from the Twente University in the Netherlands, and Pippa Norris of the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (currently on secondment to the United Nations). We hope to add Professor Liesbet Hooghe, of the Free University of Amsterdam and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Professor Max Kaase of the University of Bremen who would additionally serve as liaison with the European Social Survey whose data collection standards we seek to emulate.