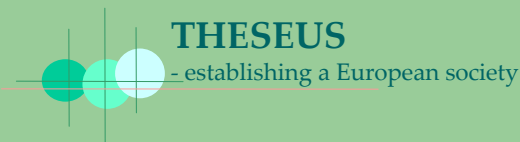


# La présidence française de l'Union européenne : un tournant pour l'Europe ? The French Presidency: A Transforming Moment for the European Union?

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## THESES AS FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR THE WORK OF THE ROUND- TABLES

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT - a moment of transformation?

- The French Presidency constituted a moment of transformation for the EU system.
- The credibility and legitimacy of the EU as a political system have been strengthened.
- The French presidency coincided with crises which created new or at least sharpened challenges for the role of Europe in the world including relations with neighbours and allies.
- Conventional doctrines of economic policies have been destroyed – and with that major principles of the internal market and of the EMU.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT - a new leadership?

- The activities of the French presidency have upgraded the EU as arena for reacting to crises mobilizing the problem-solving instinct of European leaders and reinforcing the intergovernmental approach of the EU decision-making process.
- The French presidency documented the open demand for leadership in and for Europe-if not supplied by institutions (see. e.g. option by the Lisbon Treaty) additional forms are likely to come up.
- Competition for leadership in the EU is positive.
- Irrespective of its real performance and effectiveness the French presidency is a good candidate for becoming a myth of leadership.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT - the presidencies and the architecture of the EU

- Presidencies are in most cases more than just a rotating chair. They indicate major milestones at critical junctures of the EU both in system- as in policy-making.
- Being a “big” Member State has been an advantage in the crisis management during the French Presidency.
- A permanent Presidency of the European Council would have done better vis à vis the crisis.
- Despite the conventional fear that small and inexperienced member states have difficulties in leading successful presidencies, the difference in real performance between the French and the Czech presidency might not be that large.