

# The Bridges Project: Policy Bites

We put pressing questions to European policy-makers participating in our 2016 retreat to open a discussion about political inertia and opportunities for action.

Here are some tasters from our interviews with Carlo Batori, Head of the Near East and Arab League Bureau and Counsellor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy; and Serge Bossini, deputy director at the French Civil Service.

Find out more about the 2016 Bridges retreat here:

<http://counterpoint.uk.com/who-is-we-the-bridges-retreat-2016/>

# “Across Europe, policy-makers seem to be stuck and less able to make decisions. Why do you think that is?”



A combination of factors. Primarily, the impact of global issues limits the margin of manoeuvrability of national politics. This creates a number of obstacles that make it difficult for a government to even manage daily life. This of course leads to a decrease in the perception of legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public. This loss of support results in a vicious circle that leads to yet more shortcomings in the way policy-makers act. These problems of spiralling inertia are of course something that politics has to look into, as a matter of priority.

*Carlo Batori*

I have never thought about it in these terms...but that is precisely the problem: the fact that we policy-makers may not see how problematic decision-making has become.

*Serge Bossini*



# “What can be done to address this problem?”



We must think of new sources of legitimacy. Something that can help people who feel alienated and less represented at the political level to reach out to policy makers to be able to shape politics to a greater extent. I don't know if representative parliamentary systems, if representative democracies, have been very effective in capturing all these inputs from different sections of society. Perhaps a representative parliamentary system can be complemented by other instruments and tools that modern, 21<sup>st</sup> century democracies can put in place to capture the aspirations and prerogatives of new collectives.

*Carlo Batori*

I think every one of us in the policy field should consider insights in social sciences. If we don't have such discussions, we are at risk of resorting to very archetypal models of decision-making. We should be aware of the processes that influence our way of thinking and decision-making.

*Serge Bossini*

