

Pan-European but Eurosceptic

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Not to take the federalist vision as an article of faith in your leader articles is one thing, but to support the Eurosceptic stance with dubious arguments is quite another.

The general election in Germany, like all general elections in Europe, was fought on domestic and European issues ("The need for real debate", 14 October). Since all EU members are democratic states, there is nothing 'unstoppable' about further integration moves. The peoples of Europe will always have the right and the means of stopping whatever proposal they disapprove of through parliamentary votes and/or referendums.

The 'groundswell of discontent' with European institutions is by no means confined to them. As *The European's* own poll published in May showed, national governments are much more distrusted than European institutions (63 and 48 per cent respectively). In Britain, the current semi-Eurosceptic government is supported by only 17 per cent of its people (Mori).

Your use of the term "Maastricht debacle" is curious, since the treaty has been ratified by all member states and there is no evidence that its objectives will not be achieved. It is far from clear that "integrationist thinking...has caused so many former supporters of the European ideal to bridle and think again". Take the most important issue of the Maastricht treaty – the creation of a single currency. In 1990 it was supported by 59 per cent of the population (Gallup). In April this year it was still 58 per cent (Mori).

The correct "balance between the Union and the member states" should involve the transfer to EU level of all global issues such as currency, defence, foreign policy, diplomacy; high-level policing, environment and transport. Agriculture and some other structural policies should be brought back to national level. Europe needs an honest and clear debate, not a biased though a 'real' one. A pan-European Eurosceptic newspaper sounds a little like a contradiction in terms.