The European Convention on the Future of Europe will submit the results of its deliberations the Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003. The aim of this conference is to provide a contribution to the debate by bringing together the many scholars involved in different facets of European studies at Oxford University, scholars outside Oxford and participants in the Convention. It is decidedly multi-disciplinary as it seeks to link perspectives on Europe informed by history, political science, sociology, political theory and law, as well as literature and linguistics, and of course, politics.

We start from the premise that a European constitution – or a Constitutional Charter- cannot and should not reproduce at the European level the constitutional logic of the nation-state in general, nor of any state in particular. At the same time – and this may be the fundamental tension of this whole exercise- national political cultures constitute the fundamental historical and conceptual building blocks for constitutional thinking in the EU. National traditions, myth, practices, assumptions, collective likes and dislikes constrain and inspire in fundamental ways the designs of the Convention. Thus, while the EU should not become a "state writ large", in practice, the design of its institutions has been and continues to be inspired by “what we know”. We propose to explore how national "models" have inspired a possible European Constitution - and how in turn the EU as a polity can and should diverge from such models. We will ask what kind of lessons, positive or negative, can be drawn from national historical trajectories; how European elites and citizens themselves tend to project their respective models onto the European level and how this inspires their positions on specific questions; and how the role of the State and of the Constitution are approached in different ways across countries and cultures, a divergence which in turn creates variation in the political language and expectations of European polity-building among present and future participating States.

We will concentrate in particular on three of the core themes of the Convention, namely: modes of representation, allocation of powers and subsidiarity, citizenship for a polity of peoples. Although we cannot hope to have each national model formally represented in our panel presentations, we hope to see a wide variety of national perspectives.
Friday, 25th April

16.00-17.00: Registration

17.00: Convenors’ Welcome:
Timothy Garton Ash, European Studies Centre, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford
David Hine, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford

17.15-19.00 SESSION I: When is the time right? Historical big bangs and peaceful reform
Chair: Kalypso Nicolaidis, European Studies Centre, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford

This is not a classical constitutional moment, to say the least. No war, no revolution, no great upheaval has preceded it, nor the need to lay the grounds for historical reconciliation. The European constitution has been in the making for the last half century. Indeed, the Convention on the Future of Europe has not even been labeled a “Constitutional Convention.” Yet, it has been producing the building blocks of a Constitution for Europe, or more modestly a “constitutional treaty.” What can we learn from the “constitutional moments” of the past? Can the historical “big bangs” which established constitutions in the past be reproduced in a period of peaceful change for a European constitution? To what extent can we extrapolate from State to non-State entities, from national to post-national constitutional moments? When have Constitutional debates of the past succeeded in moving from bargains over specific interests to conversations about the common good? Is democratic debate and broad participation necessary to the legitimacy of such exercises, at least in our times? Is a founding myth a necessary condition of constitution-making that will endure?

Speakers: Paul Craig, Law Faculty, Oxford
Philip Schmitter, European University Institute, Florence
Larry Siedentop, Department of Politics and International Relations, Oxford

19.30 Reception in Trinity College
20.00 Dinner in Trinity College
Speaker: Giuliano Amato, Vice-President, The European Convention

Saturday, 26th April

8.30-9.15 Coffee served
Chair: Robert Gildea, Faculty of Modern History, University of Oxford

Few doubt that the EU is not and cannot be built on the model of the European nation, state or nation-state. Nevertheless, elites and peoples in Europe have often tended to project some of the features of their own national models onto the European project, be it broad constitutive characteristics like the rule of law, the role of the state, federal structures or democratic practices, or be it specific policies and institutions. Some national models seem to lend themselves to such "narratives of projection" better than others. Contrast Germany and the UK for instance. This panel will examine various national "models" and their relevance to the EU. What can we learn from such implicit or explicit narratives both from a historical perspective (how have they traditionally projected what features of their national model) and normatively (which features of which countries would indeed appear relevant for the reform of the EU)? Is it fruitful to refer to national "models" and in what way? In order to reject them...
There is a long-held fear of "creeping competences" in many European quarters. How far, people ask, will the EU push its brief in the name of building a single market, and beyond, "common" policies of all kind (from asylum to defence)? As a result, the question of allocation of competence or powers has been at the top of the Convention agenda. But because most competences are shared and in any case need to be exercised flexibly and dynamically, simply creating competence lists cannot deal with the issue adequately. Instead, the Convention has been revisiting the formulation and operationalisation of the concept of subsidiarity introduced in the Treaties at Maastricht a decade ago. What should it say and who should police it? What modes of governance are best appropriate in the spirit of subsidiarity? Here we plan to revisit these well trodden questions from the point of view of national models, including how relationships between state and various layers of regional powers were originally defined and then and adapted by different polities in Europe and what such histories bring to the European debate. If the EU is to be seen not only as multi-layered but also multi-centred entity, what can we learn from the traditional centre-periphery relations negotiated over centuries in the various member states? And how can subsidiarity at the European level relate to more recent devolution efforts at the national level?

In 1953, a Committee emanating from the ESCE wrote a draft constitution for Europe which envisaged a tripartite mode of representation: a Council representing member states, a European Parliament representing national Parliaments, and an Assembly representing European peoples directly. The EEC that was finally created retained only the first and second modes, but two decades later proceeded to do away with the second in favor of the third. And another two decades later, the Convention revisits both the role of national parliaments and the balance between Council and Parliament in the European construct. At stake is the balance and relationship between state-based and people-based representation, functional and territorial representation, direct and indirect representation. What can national choices in this regard teach us for Europe -including specific national proposals at the Convention? Under what conditions have which modes of representation prevailed historically? What modes of representation best serve participatory and accountability purposes? And how can we ensure that European citizens feel "represented" at the European level?
It has become a cliché to argue that the European Union is a post-national, post-Westphalian, even post-modern polity. Yet, institutional and policy debates and decisions do not always reflect this insight and the requirement of building the EU as a polity of peoples. Witness the views expressed on the democratic deficit and democratic legitimacy in the EU which often consider the constitution of a "European demos" if not as a prerequisite at least as an aim of European integration. Here again, we can use as our starting point an exploration of how European polities in the form of nation-states have managed (or not) the tension between the one and the many. How for instance have national constitutions and institutions accommodated the diversity of groups (peoples?) in their mist? But this is where the national analogy finds its most stringent limit. Maybe then we need to turn to the now defunct model of empires… And beyond models, a community of European peoples needs to imagine itself as an irreducible plurality and find the ways to express this commitment in practice. Should the Constitution of Europe start off as such: "We, the Peoples of Europe…"?

Speakers:  
**Peter Kraus**, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
**Paul Magnette**, Université libre de Bruxelles  
**Andrew Duff**, Vice-President of the European Parliamentary delegation to the Convention and Chair of the Liberal Caucus.

11.00-11.30 Coffee / Tea / Refreshments

11.30-13.15 **SESSION VI. Concluding Roundtable**

Chair: **Timothy Garton Ash**, Director, European Studies Centre, St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford

Speakers: **Bronislaw Geremek**, Professor of European Civilisation and former Polish foreign minister
Giuliano Amato, Vice-President of the Convention and former Italian Prime Minister (TBC)

Lord MacLennan of Rogart, The Federal Trust

Kimmo Kiljunen, Member of the Convention, Member of the Finnish Parliament

13.15 Lunch

14.30 Excursion - Optional