

1 **Europe's leadership**

2 **After Lisbon**

3 *(original at http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14803052)*

4 **The European Union is likely to choose weak leaders. It needs strong ones.**

5 The ratification of Europe's Lisbon treaty, which has been brought to an end by the
6 signature of the very reluctant Czech president, Vaclav Klaus, has been dispiriting. The
7 treaty does little to make the European Union any simpler or more transparent. Nor will it
8 make the EU more democratic or bring it any closer to ordinary citizens: indeed, voters in
9 three countries said no to its provisions, only for their wishes to be steamrollered.

10 Yet as Lisbon is entering into force, it is time to move on to the pressing task of making
11 the EU work better. The first task may come next week, when European leaders choose
12 candidates for the two top jobs being created by Lisbon: the president of the European
13 Council and a high representative for foreign policy. Unfortunately, the continent's rulers
14 are likely to do a bad job on it.

15 A consensus has emerged that the first council president should be a low-profile person,
16 preferably from a small EU country and the political centre-right. One of the current
17 favourites is the Belgian prime minister the unknown Herman Van Rompuy. He seems to
18 have not yet acquired as many critics as his Dutch and Luxembourgish counterparts,
19 Jan Peter Balkenende and Jean-Claude Juncker.

20 There is nothing inherently wrong about a Benelux prime minister in Brussels. However,
21 if Europeans want their club to be taken seriously, such a person must be able to match
22 the traffic-stopping power of an American or Chinese president. Although they are
23 doubtless excellent men in their way, neither Mr. Van Rompuy, nor Mr. Balkenende, nor
24 Mr. Juncker could do that. Mr. Blair would.

Questions

- 1) What is the gist of the article? How does it match the headline (The European Union is likely to choose weak leaders. It needs strong ones. (Line 4))
- 2) What are the arguments used to support this proposition?
- 3) Why are Europe's leaders likely to pick the wrong candidates for the two important jobs (president and high representative)? (lines 15-16)
- 4) 'Dispiriting' (line 6) – what does dispiriting mean in this context? Can you name some synonyms to this word?
- 5) Why has the ratification of the Lisbon treaty been 'dispiriting'?
- 6) 'Voters in three countries said no to its provisions, only for their wishes to be steamrollered' (lines 8-9). What events does this sentence refer to? What three countries are meant?
- 7) Words connecting sentences or larger parts of texts like 'however' (line 20) are called conjuncts. They are extremely important for structuring the flow of the text and expressing the relations between its various parts. What other conjuncts can you find in the text? Can you name any additional ones? Give examples of how they are used in a text.
- 8) 'Traffic-stopping power' (22) What does this phrase mean? Could you paraphrase it ?
- 9) Do you agree with the proposition of the article? ('The European Union is likely to choose weak leaders. It needs strong ones. (Line 4))? And with its conclusion (line 24) Why? Why not?

Vocabulary

Provision/ provide (we provide the best education in town x the Treaty provides that...) (line 9)

be likely to (line 14)

seems to be/have been etc. (17)

match (21)

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček: