

# WHAT WILL BE?

## Analysis and Visions for Europe

Department of Sociology at the Alpen-Adria-Universität (Klagenfurt)

Deadline: April 15, 2009.

Date: September 25-26, 2009.

The symposium *What will be? Analysis and Visions for Europe* is organized in cooperation with the Croatian Association for Life-Long Learning (Zagreb). It is planned that the threads of the symposium dealing with »boundary/enlargement« and »transition/transformation« will be discussed in a first round in June, 2009, in Sibenik/Croatia. (The exact dates will be known in due course.)

The symposium will take the format of 25-minute presentations plus 10-15 minutes of discussion following each paper. Send your abstracts (not exceeding 250 words) to josef.langer@uni-klu.ac.at. Inquiries concerning the organization and progress of the preparations can also be directed towards Karen Meehan at karen.meehan@uni-klu.ac.at.

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The Department of Sociology at the University of Klagenfurt is hosting a symposium entitled *What will be? Analysis and Visions for Europe* from 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 2009 in Klagenfurt, Austria. It is the fourth in a row of symposia dealing with important dimensions of European Union development – *Euroregion* (2005), *Forces Shaping the EU* (2006) and *Knowledge Society* (2007). This time the focus of the symposium will be on the strategic confusion among the diverse national and supranational elites as well as the wider population concerning the future of the »European project«. The symposium has two main objectives:

- To create awareness of the current visions about the future of Europe, whether these visions openly compete or work separately and
- to evaluate the likelihood of different visions becoming reality in the medium (~ 2030) and long term (~ 2050).

### Subject

The strategic confusion about the future of the EU and Europe is obvious and has dramatically increased since the transition from an economic community (EEC) to the project of a politically integrated Europe (EU) in the Nineties and more so since the 2004 »big bang« enlargement. Whereas some, particularly among politicians, still narrate the vision of an »ever closer Union«, contradictions and cleavages are increasingly rising to the surface. The long and painful process of ratifying and rephrasing a constitutional Treaty for the EU can be seen as evidence for such confusion and uncertainty. Where, for example, former Commission President Romano Prodi once called the EU a »Union for a Thousand years«, others see the EU as an undertaking that has already failed and finished. Between these points of view we can find dozens of partly contradictory assumptions about the character of the EU, often resulting in suggestions of how the EU could or should develop. It seems that controversial views such as the EU as a »new Soviet Union«, an »area of freedom and rule of law«, a »power from Venus«, a »global player«, an »ever deeper Union«, a mere »free trade area« etc. significantly vary between Member States as well as different political and social groups.

Contributions to the symposium are encouraged to elaborate this context: the geo-strategic (e.g. Atlantic vs. Continental) and political (e.g. elite vs. people) affinity of visions and analysis picturing the EU. And, further, the prospective consequences of such constellations.

### Structure

Given the complexity of the subject of the symposium, multi- and interdisciplinary approaches are particularly welcome. To foster this, the symposium will explicitly offer threads such as »EU institutions« (e.g. intergovernmental vs. federal), »boundary/enlargement« (e.g. the expected geographical shape of the EU), »transition/transformation« (e.g. the kind of economy and society emerging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe) and »European Mind« (e.g. impact of EU on philosophy, arts, knowledge and education in Europe; intellectual agendas in general). This will provide the opportunity to identify relevant discourses and historical factors (»path dependence«) critical for identifying the most likely medium and long term 21<sup>st</sup> century identity of the EU and Europe.