



Newsletter

Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence - FIU

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2010

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Full Schedule in the Fall

This fall marks the tenth year of the activities of the Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence (MEUCE) and thus a decade-long collaboration between the University of Miami and Florida International University. "This has been," commented Rebecca Friedman, FIU's co-Director, "a flourishing and growing partnership over the years. We have always worked together – through faculty and student support, publications/ research and community outreach – to reach the largest possible constituency in South Florida and beyond. Each of us welcomes speakers from around the country and the globe every year to engage in discussions about the EU, its past and its future. Although we



Dr. Rebecca Friedman
Co-Director, MEUCE, FIU



Dr. Joaquín Roy
Co-Director, MEUCE, UM

focus a lot on the EU's relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean, we also welcome discussions about Europe's relationship with all if its neighbors and partners around the world."

Over the years this partnership has successfully linked the MEUCE with many constituencies, locally, nationally and internationally. One manifestation of this success on a local (and national) level is the increasingly visible Euro Challenge Program, coordinated by Ms. Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, the Associate Director at FIU. Recruitment is already in full swing and high-school students and teachers from four Florida counties – Miami Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Port St. Lucie – will participate in the

competition next March at FIU. Other events that will draw guests from across the Miami community include lectures on "The Euro and the Dollar in the World Economy" and "The Union for the Mediterranean and the EU Neighborhood Policy" at The University of Miami, and French Week at FIU. Beginning on November 4th, French Week includes a series of events that

celebrate French culture, film, art as well as cuisine. It provides an alluring entryway into European culture for our students, faculty and community members alike.

Upcoming activities also include a focus on areas of Central and Eastern Europe. In early November there will be the first in a series of events tied to the new collaborative effort entitled the Polish Lecture Series, a joint project between FIU's MEUCE, European Studies Program and the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland and the American Institute of Polish Culture. On November 4th, Professor Timothy Snyder of Yale University will kick-off the series with a lecture titled "Poles and Stalinist Terror: Memory and Obliv-

ion". The second lecture will be in November 22nd and will feature Professor Padraic Kenney of Indiana University who will speak on "The Secrets to Solidarity's Success: Poland on the World Stage since 1980". In addition to the Polish events, the MEUCE on November 17 will host the Czech Ambassador to the United Nations, Hon. Martin Palous. This event is part of SIPA's Ruth K. and Shepard Broad Distinguished Lecture Series. His presentation will be titled: "From the Perspectives of a Small State: International Politics at the Beginning of the 21st Century".

Dr. Friedman is very much looking forward to the Ambassador's lecture as he will return in the spring as a Visiting Scholar in the School for International and Public Affairs. "We are very happy to have the ambassador as a Visiting Scholar in the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) next year. This will be an excellent opportunity for our students to gain insights and talk to a real insider in European and world politics." This is especially true in this case as Ambassador Palous was one of the signers of the "Charter 77" on Human Rights. He will share his knowledge and experiences with FIU's students in the classroom this spring.

Both halves of the MEUCE have full agendas this fall and throughout the year. 2010-11 is already an exciting year, as the Center continues to grow and its impact deepens during the tenth year in its existence in Florida.

By Sven Kube

MEUCE Grant Recipients to Publish Research



Dr. Markus Thiel

"Business before pleasure" is a common proverb alluding to the stereotypical German work ethic. For Dr. Markus Thiel, a German-born Assistant Professor in FIU's Department of Politics and International Relations, pleasure in a way preceded business last summer, when he undertook field trips to Brussels and Vienna in order to conduct research in institutions of the European Union. Now he has to turn his findings into publishable research. Thiel was one of this season's grantees of the Miami-Florida European Union Center for Excellence (MEUCE), which covered his traveling and living expenses.

The application process was open to faculty and PhD candidates at FIU, the Universities of North, Central, and South Florida as well as Florida Atlantic University. Applicants came from a variety of academic fields such as Modern Languages, History, International Relations, Communication Studies, and Architecture. All scholars have one thing in common though: Their research addresses topics of European concern.

Markus Thiel's special field is the development of a European Civil Society across the borders of the nation states. His latest interest within that field is the role of the European Union Agency of Fundamental Rights (FRA), which was established in Vienna in 2007. Explains Dr. Thiel: "This new institution is concerned with social groups such as legal and illegal immigrants, asylum-seekers, and ethnic minorities in each of the EU's member states. The FRA is supposed to monitor, survey, and

document the national governments' compliance with rules and regulations which are stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty, an early draft of a European constitution."

His grant paid for two field trips to Vienna and Brussels. While in Austria he spent the best part of the time conducting interviews with FRA representatives including Morten Kjaerum, the Danish director of the agency. In Belgium's capital, home to the union's administrative headquarters, Thiel met with EU officials and diplomats as well as representatives of several non-governmental organizations.

FIU's expert on EU domestic affairs is looking forward to include his first-hand knowledge into one of his forthcoming publications next year. "I am grateful for the support provided through MEUCE," Thiel

port of her examination of Spanish labor unions in Madrid.

"The MEUCE grant enabled me to conduct research that was necessary for writing the last chapter of the book I am publishing next year," says Hamann. She is an expert on Western European politics and is currently researching the role of labor unions in Spanish politics from the 1960s onwards. She utilized the grant money to travel to Madrid, where she conducted interviews with union leaders, scholars, civil servants, and politicians. Recalls Hamann: "It was quite ironic that at the time when I was there, the unions protested against governmental social policy on the streets of Madrid. I found myself right in the middle of the campaign." Hamann has already presented her findings at several conferences and expects to have the book out in early summer 2011.



Dr. Kerstin Hamann



Unions demonstrated in Madrid earlier this year

said, "as in these times of tight budgeting, obtaining research grants is certainly not the easiest part of our job."

His fellow grant recipients in the 2009/2010 competition would likely agree. The MEUCE award commonly pays variable amounts to grantees who intend to travel to Europe, covering airfares and accommodation. Thiel's Political Sciences colleague, Dr. Kerstin Hamann at the University of Central Florida, for instance, received sup-

MEUCE's two Faculty Curriculum Development Awards went to Florida Atlantic University's Political Science faculty member Dr. Aimee Kanner Arias, who received funds to develop a new graduate level course entitled "The European Union as a Global Actor" and to Dr. Carla Calarge and Prisca Augustyn, both faculty members in Florida Atlantic University's Department of Languages, Linguistics and Comparative Literature, who examine the role of Islam in Europe. The next round of MEUCE awards is to be announced later this year with a tentative deadline of February 1, 2011.

By Sven Kube

Summering in France

It was Dr. Peter Machonis, an associate professor with the Modern languages Department, who implemented the exchange program some fifteen years ago. Since then, small groups of the department's undergraduate students travel from Miami to the beautiful old city of Angers in north-western France. Accompanied by some of the department's faculty members, FIU students usually spend four weeks in Europe, staying with French host families and meet foreign students from all around the world. Their main reason for making the trip, however, is to gain intensive foreign language training. The courses take place on the campus of the Université Catholique de l'Ouest, or La Catho, as it is commonly referred to. Every year the school welcomes students from than one-hundred universities from other countries in Europe as well as the Americas and, increasingly, Asia.

For Dr. Pascale Becel, partici-



Dr. Pascale Becel

ating in the exchange project was a first-time experience as well. Because the faculty members who were originally supposed to travel were concerned with research projects, the chair of FIU's Department of Modern Languages spontaneously decided to fill in and accompany the unit's undergrads to Angers. She seems to have enjoyed herself during these four weeks in her native land: "It is very much possible that I will go again this year—no matter if I have to fill in or not," she smiles. Becel came to the US more than twenty years ago as an exchange student at Kalamazoo College in Michigan. After completing her PhD in French Literature at the University of California at Davis, she de-

cided that "it would be just as nice to live on the other coast of the country for a while" and gladly accepted a position in FIU's Modern Languages unit.

tems and learn that in other cultures, it is the most natural thing in the world to turn off the lights when leaving the house or conserve water while taking a shower." As the



The town of Angers is a romantic site, particularly in the evening hours

She enjoys watching her students improve both their language and social skills in the course of the visit to France. "Naturally, living in another country both forces and motivates you to communicate with native speakers, and you pick up so much more than in a seminar room," says Becel, who was herself a former exchange student. She is convinced that students also profit on a personal level, gaining awareness for issues that they would never think about in their domestic environment: "For some in our group, last year's trip was their first time to leave Miami or Florida for a longer period. Once young Ameri-



Angers's code of arms

cans experience living on another continent, they begin to see things with different eyes. They would discuss the advantages of public transport sys-

tem old saying goes, traveling broadens the mind.

Undergraduate students in the Department of Modern Languages may apply to the exchange program every year. It is advised that they have advanced at least one year into the program while a minimum GPA of 2.0 is expected. Extra-departmental funding opportunities are available.

By Sven Kube



Angers is in the North-west of France

Gaining New Perspectives as Interns



Dana Mekler must have seemed the perfect match for the Consulado General de España en Miami when the staff received her application to an internship last summer. The FIU student, who majors in International Relations, ended up working at the consulate in Coral Gables until May. Born and raised in Madrid, Mekler moved to Miami with her family only one year ago and highly enjoyed promoting her native to researchers, teachers, and students in the US.



Dana Mekler

At the consulate she took an intern position in the Department of Education and Science. Her favorite part of the experience was the coordination of the Cultural Ambassadors Program, through which students and graduates have the chance to live in Spain for one year, teaching English language classes in high-schools. Says Mekler: "I was involved in pretty much all aspects of organizing the exchange, most importantly in the processing of visas and the tough selection process." Mekler admits that the job required a degree of dedication as the consulate in Miami received applications from pretty much all states of the American South-east.

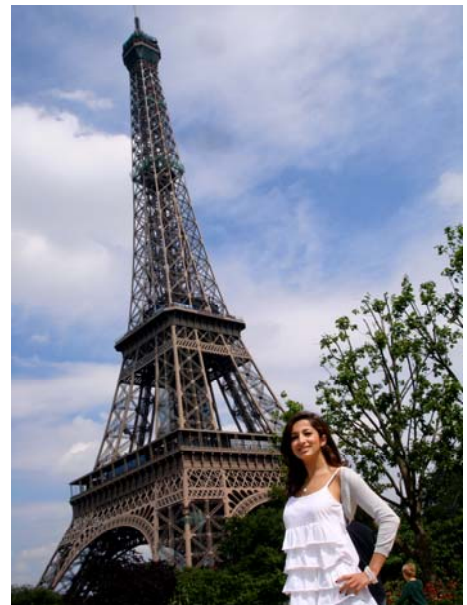
About 200 young Americans passed the selection, which included the evaluation of sample essays. "I must have read about 600 essays while I worked there," the 20-year old student recalls, "which is good as over time you

develop an eye for what has to go into a good essay. It is a form of practicing." The same is true for the administrative part of her internship: "I would say that I now know a thing or two about the bureaucratic obstacles many people have to overcome if they want to relocate from the US to Europe or vice versa." Despite the close ties between the US and the EU, bureaucracy has not ceased by any means to be an issue for those eager to commute between the continents.

Marccia Moreno agrees with this notion wholeheartedly. The 23-year old International Relations major found herself in the dilemma that the French immigration authorities demanded a document that FIU—and possibly all other universities at least in Florida—do simply not issue. "I turned to the Miami-Florida European Center and fortunately, Mrs. Caly-Sanchez was able to help me find a way through the bureaucratic maze." Ultimately, Moreno boarded her plane to France in September 2009 and began a half-year long internship in Paris, her favorite city.

Recounts the 23-year old student: "I had spent time in Europe before, especially when I traveled the Czech Republic. But when I went to Paris three years ago to study at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris III, I fell in love with the place." The fact that her boyfriend is French added to her motivation to return there and complete an internship in the largest city of France. "I worked at the French headquarters of an Italian corporation which specializes in acoustic engineering," she adds, "They placed me in their Human Resources and Marketing department where I was responsible for coordinating communication between the corporation's many regional centers."

According to Moreno, the biggest benefit of the six-month work placement was the inevitable exposition to the French language.



Marccia Moreno in Paris

"Ironically, many of my colleagues always wanted to talk to me in English," she smiles, "but for ninety-five percent of the time, when on the phone or in meetings, I was forced to communicate in French. Such a situation is the best context I can think of to improve one's skills."

What are her likes and dislikes regarding the "Old World?" Replies the soon-to-be FIU alum: "Well, I perceived professional life to be a little over-organized at times. Things like work hours are organized in a much stricter way than in the US, and colleagues seldom do anything together after work." Naturally, she also has a lot of praise for the countries across the pond. "I absolutely love the fact that you can travel to so many different places and experience cultural variety without having to go on a big trip," she muses. "I went to Greece, Italy, Switzerland—even to Israel!" However, Europe will have to wait a little while for Ms. Moreno to return: "I am moving to California next year," she says. Most Europeans would probably agree: Not so bad at all either.

By Sven Kube

Summer Book Tour in Europe with Joaquín Roy



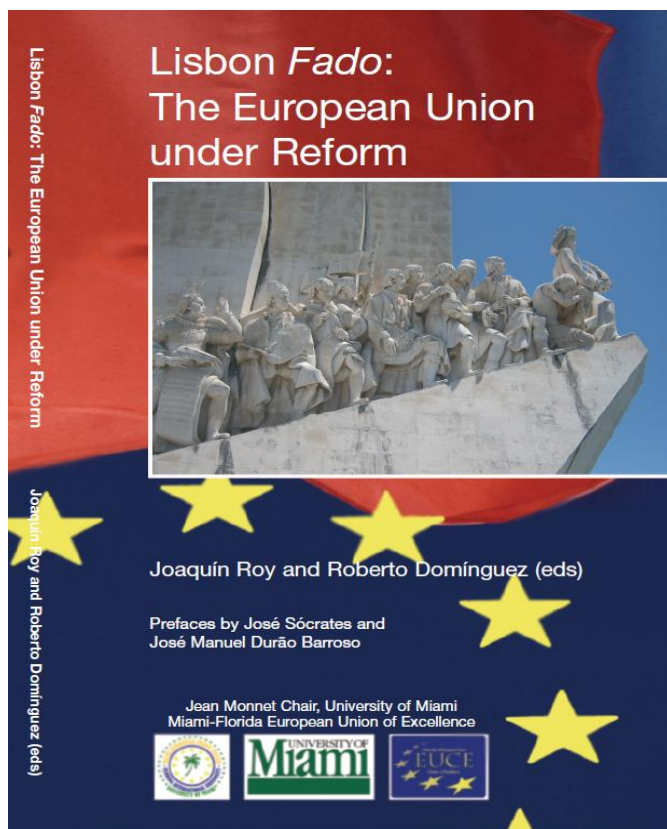
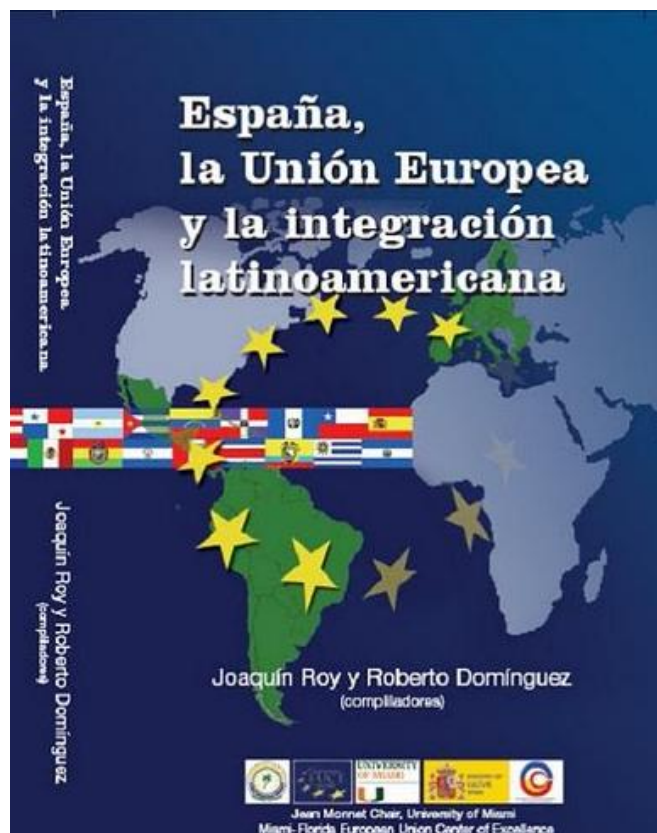
Dr. Joaquín Roy

Traditionally, summer is a busy time of the year for Dr. Joaquín Roy. The Jean Monnet Professor of European Integration at the University of Miami and Co-Director of the Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence tends to spend the warm season in Europe, attending numerous conferences and roundtable discussions over there. Having authored, edited, and co-edited almost two dozen books on issues pertaining to European politics, economy, and culture, Roy is a frequent guest at academies and universities across Europe.

Among Professor Roy's destinations in 2010 were the Asamblea Parlamentaria de la Unión Europea y América Latina in Seville, the Instituto para América Latina y Portugal in the Spanish town of Salamanca, the Toledo-based School of Law at Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, the Jean Monnet Conference in Europe's political capital, Brussels, the Centro de Estudios y Documentación Internacionales de Barcelona, and the Tor Vergata University in Rome. On the occasion, the MEUCE co-director established new contacts in both political and academic circles.

For more information, click on the following link:
<http://www6.miami.edu/eucenter/>

By Sven Kube



Book presentation at the Centro de Estudios y Documentación Internacionales de Barcelona in June 2010

Book presented: "España, la UE y la integración latinoamericana"

Dr. Joaquín Roy (left) with Dr. Anna Ayuso (CIDOB), Dr. Francesc Granell (University of Barcelona), and Dr. Manuel Cienfuegos (University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona)

Book presentation at the Jean Monnet Conference in Brussels in May 2010

Book presented: "Lisbon Fado"



Dr. Joaquín Roy (right) with José Manuel Durão Barroso, the current President of the European Commission



MEUCE Activities in the Fall Oct./ Nov. 2010

For details and additions to the program, please visit our respective internet sites at:
<http://casgroup.fiu.edu/miamieuc/events.php> or <http://www6.miami.edu/EUCenter/>

OCTOBER 2010

Tuesday, Oct. 19 | 1:00pm - 2:30pm

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, GL 220

MEUCE Roundtable

"Postwar Japan and Germany in the Context of EU External Relations"

- Dr. Katja Weber, Co-Director European Union Center, Georgia Institute of Technology
- Dr. Thomas Weber, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Boston University
- Dr. Paul Kowert, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, FIU

Monday, Oct. 25 | 5pm - 6pm

University of Miami, Merrick 307

Presentation

- María Lorca-Susino: "The Euro and the Dollar in the World Economy"

Friday, Oct. 29 | 1:30pm - 5:30pm

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, GL 835

Teacher Workshop

"Euro Challenge Competition 2011"

NOVEMBER 2010

FRENCH WEEK | Nov. 4-10

at FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus

- **Thursday, Nov. 4, | 10:00am - 12:00pm | GC 241**
"Groupe de Lecture"
- **Thursday, Nov. 4 | 6:30pm - 7:30pm | DM 194**
Conference on French Literature
With Dr. Marcelle M. Welch
- **Friday, Nov 5 | 6:00pm - 8:00pm | Frost Art Museum**
Pictures Exhibition: "Expressions of Avignon"
- **Monday, Nov. 8 | 12:00pm - 2:00pm | Panther Suite**
Cheese Presentation by Marky's
- **Tuesday, Nov. 9 | 1:00pm - 9:30pm | GC 140**
Film Night: Celebrating Marion Cotillard
1:00pm "De si Longues Fiancailles"
5:30pm "Jeux d'Enfants"
7:30pm "La Mome / La Vie en Rose"
- **Wednesday, Nov. 10 | 3:30pm - 5:00pm | GC 343**
"Cultural Awareness Day: France"

NOVEMBER 2010

Monday, Nov. 1 | 08:00pm - 9:30pm

Books and Books—Coral Gables

Book Presentation

"The Seduction of Modern Spain - The Female Body and the Francoist Body Politic" by Dr. Aurora Morcillo, FIU Department of History/Women's Studies.

Thursday, Nov. 4 | 11:00am - 12:30pm

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, GC Middle Ballroom

Presentation and Discussion

- Dr. Timothy Snyder, Professor of History, Yale University: "Poles and Stalinist Terror: Memory and Oblivion"

Monday, Nov. 8 | 5:00pm - 6:00pm

University of Miami, Merrick 307

Presentation

- Astrid Boening: "The Union for the Mediterranean and the EU Neighborhood Policy"

Wednesday, Nov. 10 | 12:00pm - 1:30pm

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, GL 220

Discussion

- FIU students: "What Does It Mean to Be European?"

Monday, Nov. 15 | 2:00pm - 4:00pm

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, GC 316

MEUCE Roundtable: "Consulates' Information Panel: Learn How to Live, Study and Work Abroad"

- Ms. Martine Johnston, Education Attaché
Consulate General of France, Miami
- Ms. Vilma Pesciallo, Students Office
Consulate General of Italy in Miami
- Mrs. Beata Paszyc, Honorary Vice Consul, Honorary
Consulate of the Republic of Poland
- Mr. Juan Jose Cogolludo-Díaz, Education Advisor
Consulate General of Spain, Miami

Wednesday, Nov. 17 | 10:00am - 11:30am

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, MARC Int. Pavilion

Lecture

- Ambassador Martin Palous (Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations): "From the Perspective of a Small State: International Politics at the Beginning of the 21st Century"

Monday, Nov. 22 | 12:00pm - 2:00pm

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, GC Middle Ballroom

Presentation

- Dr. Padraic Kenney, Professor of History, Indiana University: "The Secrets to Solidarity's Success: Poland on the World Stage since 1980"

Chatting With One of the EU's Most famous Critics



President Klaus

Václav Klaus is a member of the exclusive Spanish Order of Isabella the Catholic, received the Grand Star for Services to the Republic of Austria, and also picked up a Saxon Merit Cross. The

Czech President also received about fifty honorary degrees from universities all over the world. He is somewhat famous for his outspoken views on European politics and his deeply rooted skepticism towards European unification. These views have made the 69-year old politician one of the most visible critics of the European Union's current power structures. On September 22, FIU students as well as faculty members from departments such as History, Economics, and Politics / International Relations followed the Miami European Union Center's invitation to participate in a real-time video conference with Klaus and hear his ideas first hand.

President Václav Klaus, who was in Washington D.C. in order to meet with President Obama the next day, appeared live from the Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies where he reiterated his EU-skeptic stance throughout the one-hour exchange. FIU was one of the participating universities alongside Georgia Institute of Technology, University of North Carolina, and the University of Pittsburgh.

His criticism towards the present state of the European Union has always served the Czech President well in gaining exposure on both sides of the Atlantic. Throughout the conference it became quite

clear that Václav Klaus enjoys his role as a dissenter within the union of nation states. At the beginning of his introductory speech, he lamented a certain lack of interest in the process of European unification among the American public, particularly in the aftermath of the Lisbon treaty which is commonly alluded to as an early form of constitution and transfers even more powers to the EU government in Brussels. "You might have heard though," the 69-year old Czech leader jokingly remarked, "that I was the last one in the EU to sign it." In fact, the EU was able to put the treaty's principles fully into practice only ten months ago, when Klaus, pushed by the Czech Republic's Constitutional Court, gave up his resistance and signed the seminal document.

In the course of the conference,

for the administrative structure of the European Union, the Treaty of Maas-

tricht also implemented the Euro as the common currency in all member states. "The growing interest among the political elite to create a new superpower," the President argued, "diminished the liberation we had just achieved and resulted in a renewed centralization of decision-making." According to Klaus, the transition from the centralist principles of Communism towards the values of democracy came to a halt. The new centralist approach in terms of legislative powers and monetary policy in Europe seems to have disillusioned Klaus, who was born in 1941 and has always expressed distrust towards the concentration of power.



On that September afternoon in Green Library, the members of the audience were able to effortlessly identify the Euro as the main concern of the politician who is also regarded as an expert in political economy. While arguing that number of participating economies were simply too high for a shared currency, he also identified the Euro as a factor in the recent financial crisis. He con-

densed his long-standing criticism in a poignant thesis that also characterizes most of his publications: "The cost of establishing and maintaining the Euro," Klaus insisted, "exceed the benefits."

Having listened to the President's highly controversial remarks for about one hour, FIU students left the conference room engaged in lively discussions. The Czech leader may not be Brussels' favorite ambassador to the US, but he clearly has Americans talking about the unification of the "Old World."



Students and faculty joined Klaus in a video conference

he never tired of praising the achievements especially of Eastern European countries after the collapse of Communism. In his view, societal liberation, the privatization of the economies as well as decentralization of political responsibility were the most tremendous historical efforts of the late twentieth century. Europe was gradually growing into a political and cultural entity. "However," President Klaus mused, "the tide turned with the Maastricht Treaty in 1991."

Besides setting the cornerstone

MEUCE talks with Fulbright scholar on British-EU relations



Dr. Michael Geary is Ireland's first scholar who has received the prestigious Fulbright-

Schuman fellowship which is intended to promote US-EU studies. He teaches Contemporary European History, European Integration, and Transatlantic Relations in the Department of History at Maastricht University. In the 2010/11 academic year, Geary is a lecturer at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. FIU had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Geary as part of a roundtable on the British Elections on September 30th. On that occasion, the MEUCE had the chance to ask Geary about the current state of British-European relations.

MEUCE: Dr. Geary, how would you briefly describe the current relationship between Great Britain and the European Union?

Geary: Well, Great Britain continues to be an undecided European power. On the one hand, Britain knows that it needs Europe not only for trade and commerce but also politically, culturally. On the other hand, Britain never gave up the idea of greatness as an independent power. There is also this concept of a 'special relationship' with the US as its closest ally, even though this does not matter as much to the US as it does to the UK. The British want to keep fingers in all kinds of pies—maybe too many. I guess you could say: The British are a little scared that they might have to realize that they are European after all.

Why did the UK never feel the need to enforce and facilitate the process of European integration?

In its early stages from the 1950s onwards, the structure that is today the European Union was supposed to draw those Western European countries together which had lost

the war, most importantly Germany, Italy, and France, which was only freed by the Americans. Britain, by contrast, regarded itself a victorious power that had not endured large-scale destruction. This mentality has always played a role in the UK's perception of what has been going on in continental Europe for the past six decades. They did not feel that they need the union.



Based in Maastricht, teaching in Washington, visiting Miami: EU historian Geary

Would it have been better for Britain if they had chosen to become a major player in the creation of the EU?

With every year that they hesitated they lost influence. Great Britain could have lent itself as Germany's partner in counterbalancing the influence of France. One example, because the important role of agriculture in the French economy, farmers' products are relatively expensive and farming in France remains heavily subsidized. This was not in the interest of Germany as the German economy is more about exporting manufactured goods. But France prevailed in that dispute and now Britain has to cope with the situation because they did not play a decisive role when these

things were being negotiated. If Britain, as the origin of the Industrial Revolution, had supported Germany, the EU would be a better place for it today.



How important is the European Union as a global force in world politics?

It is quite important. The role that the EU has played so far in isolating countries such as Iran or North Korea from the community of nations should not be underestimated. While it is true that Europe, for the lack of a military force of its own, lacks the muscle to aggressively enforce its interests, it has begun to exert a certain amount of soft power through the implementations of sanctions and with other means of diplomacy. The EU is, for instance, the biggest contributor to development aid programs—which is one way to gain influence in certain parts of the world.

The current financial crisis is expected by many an observer a severe liability for the EU in its current shape and form. How serious is the situation?

Doubtlessly, the current crisis is the most serious challenge that the union has had to face in its history. Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy but also Ireland have deficits or growth rates that could result in dramatic disastrous if we are to experience a double-dip recession. High unemployment is another pressing problem in almost all of the member states. If the situation were to worsen, the economic implications would be incalculable. This is certainly a test of willpower for the participating nations as some of them have to bail out others—and we can assume that in those countries that pay the bill the patience of the public will not be endless. Yet if the union overcomes the problems of the present, there could be even more stability in the future.

By Sven Kube

Euro-Experts Analyze Future of Anglo-EU Relations



Under the title “The British elections and their impact on the European Union,”

MEUCE brought three renowned specialists with interesting biographies to last month’s Roundtable.

Her Majesty’s Consul General Kevin McGurgan, who has represented the United Kingdom in Miami since December 2009, was one of them. Prior to coming to Miami, the Scottish-born 39-year old acted as Deputy Head of the NATO Provincial Reconstruction Team in the torn country’s Helmand province. McGurgan has belonged to an exclusive club of security experts since he joined the United Nations as a specialist for regimes in the Middle East some thirteen years ago. The other two guests have academic background. Dr. Michael Geary is a Fulbright-Schuman fellow and guest lecturer at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. The born Irishman obtained a doctorate from the European Union Institute in Florence, Italy and is currently a professor of History at Maastricht University, The Netherlands. The third presenter was FIU’s very own Dr. Nicol C. Rae, a Scotsman with a D. Phil. from Oxford University, England who has also taught at Yale University. The experts’ open discussion round with students was preceded by short presentations by each one of them.

First, Dr. Rae provided an outline of long-standing currents of Euro-skepticism and pro-European attitudes in the UK. “For decades,” he summarized, “political players used to bash the policies of the

European Commission.” The traditional outlook of the ruling parties changed in the 1990s, “when Labour learnt to love the EU.” It was Britain’s Social-Democrats who, repackaged as “New Labour” by former Prime Minister Tony Blair, sought to increase the country’s commitment to the union. Rae provided the background for his two colleagues by posing the question of how the results of the recent general election in the UK would impact this relatively new course of action.

However, a gradual advancement in British integration into the EU is what Hon.

Kevin McGurgan expects to happen in the foreseeable future. “The UK needs the European market,” was one of his simple yet effective arguments. Freely admitting that Britain was one of the countries in which both the public and the political establishment are particularly hesitant when it comes to transferring power to the EU headquarters

in Brussels, Belgium, the diplomat perceives certain developments in London as friendly signals to the mainland: “Cameron recruited several ministers for his cabinet who are fluent in languages such as French and German—that was seldom a matter of concern in the past.”

According to Dr. Michael Geary, “the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have different perspectives on the EU, but the union



Presented their analyses of the recent British general election:
Dr. Michael Geary, Dr. Nicol C. Rae, Hon. Kevin McGurgan

The poll was held in May 2010 and brought the Labour Party’s thirteen-year long reign to an end. With the Conservatives emerging as the party with the highest vote the position of Prime Minister fell to David Cameron, a politician who had formerly not been lavish with praise for the process of European integration. Cameron’s recalibrating of his country’s relations with the EU was particularly eagerly expected as his coalition partner Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Party, who has a political background as a UK representative to the European Parliament.

does not matter enough to neither of them as to cause any serious dispute.” Geary does not expect Britain to diminish its commitment to European integration. One of the few potential sources of conflict could be the new Prime Minister’s promise to reduce the size of the state—if the UK were to strengthen ties with the EU, the interference of institutions with British citizens’ lives would most likely increase. However, he does not expect any major developments in Cameron’s first term because “the European Union is not really that important to the British public.”

By Sven Kube



Contact the Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence

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Dr. Volker Anding and the Coral Reef Senior HS students who were among the winners of the 2010 Euro challenge competition

Euro Challenge Competition 2011

For the fourth year in a row, high-school students from four Florida counties will participate in the Euro Challenge competition. The Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence (MEUCE) has invited teachers and students from twenty high-schools to learn about the European currency and economy, standing to win cash prizes and exciting trips to New York City and Washington, DC. Teacher orientation will take place at FIU on October 29, and student orientation on December 7. Students will compete in Miami on March 22, 2011 and receive their awards on April 7, 2011. Local winners will try their luck and skills in New York on April 27, 2011. For details visit

<http://casgroup.fiu.edu/miamieuc/pages.php?id=548> or contact Christine I. Caly-Sanchez at MEUCE at FIU. You can also find useful information on the following website: www.euro-challenge.org