



Newsletter



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MEUCE Lecture: "The EU's Energy Policy: Challenges and Opportunities"



On January 29, the FIU students and faculty had the privilege and opportunity to welcome a distinguished guest: Mr. Christian Burgsmüller, Counselor, Head of the Energy, Transport and Environment Section, Delegation of the European Union to the United States in Washington, DC. A career EU diplomat with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and a lawyer by training, Mr. Burgsmüller gave a lecture on the EU's energy policy. The event was sponsored by Miami-Florida European Union Center of Excellence, in collaboration with the European Studies Program at FIU, and the Delegation of the European Union to the United States.

After a warm introduction by Dr. Rebecca Friedman, the Co-Director of MEUCE, Mr. Burgsmüller began his talk by providing an overview of the key priorities of the EU energy policy, followed by a discussion of the major differences between the EU and U.S. energy policies. Mr. Burgsmüller pointed out that in the EU, unlike the U.S., "the climate change" theme is a settled debate and, therefore, energy and climate policy are "two sides of the same coin." Given the current security risks facing the EU economies (e.g. price increase, EU's growing external dependency, instability and risks in several producing transit regions), the European Commission adopted in 2009 an ambitious energy and climate policy ("Energy 2020"), whose major goals are: ensuring security of energy supply to the Union, promoting energy efficiency and savings, and the development of new and renewable forms of energy ("20-20-20 by 2020," the new "catch-phrase" in the EU).

Highlighting the idea that "Europe is going green," Mr. Burgsmüller explained why European countries favor this path. Europeans think that moving toward renewables and green technologies is not only good for the environment but it is also "good business." The EU thinks that by moving ahead in the game, where other countries may have to come in the future, will actually give the EU the "head start" in the race toward developing new technologies. This will benefit EU financially. A major concern of the EU's energy policy is

reducing energy dependence on other countries, especially Russia. In this respect, the EU has taken steps toward diversifying its energy sources and improving energy infrastructure. Some concrete measures include: producing more interconnectors and the construction of reverse flow pipelines to channel the gas from Mediterranean region into Europe (including Eastern Europe).

When it comes to the EU-U.S. Comparison, Mr Burgsmüller observed that, while America made significant progress toward the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, on the renewable side, the U.S has been less receptive to the idea of adopting "green technologies." This is in part due to ideological and cultural differences, which include the attitudes toward the role of government. In general, Europeans feel much more comfortable with the idea of subsidizing renewable projects. They agree that "green energy" is a worthwhile political goal and that, as a nascent industry, businesses in this field need "a helping hand" from the government. Europeans are also more willing to accept higher energy prices. In contrast, Americans are inclined to see the government as the problem, not the solution, are

more cost-conscious, and would rather choose the "traditional way." In addition to these differences, the shale gas revolution that happened in the U.S in the recent years and the discovering of the new technologies to extract gas ("fracking") has moved the energy equation in this country and it acts more as a disincentive for creating "green energy" sources.

Many aspects of this very informative presentation were further discussed in the concluding part of the event. Mr. Burgsmüller addressed numerous questions and comments/concerns raised by the FIU audience, including: how to make the biggest polluters (China, India) to join the EU-lead efforts in addressing the climate change; the issue of off-shore drilling; Russia' reaction to the EU's green policies; how Euro-crisis affected the green energy policy; the role of Green Parties in the EU countries vis-a-vis energy policy. It was a lively discussion and another exciting event organized by MEUCE.



Christian Burgsmüller
Counselor, Head of the Energy, Transport and Environment Section—Delegation of the EU to the USA

By Lavinia Bucsa

Visit of Mr. Christian Burgsmüller, Counselor, Head of the Energy, Transport and Environment Section—Delegation of the EU to the USA—in Miami—Jan. 26-28



Christian Burgsmüller presenting his lecture to FIU students



Christian Burgsmüller with Florida International University students

During his trip to Miami, Mr. Burgsmüller made different presentations on EU's Energy Policy to high schools (Miami Palmetto Senior HS, Archimedean Upper Conservatory, ISPA) and university students, European Community. He met with different European consuls general and people from the European Community.



Christian Burgsmüller and Archimedean Upper Conservatory students



From left to right: Amb. Volker Anding; Hon. Simone Filippini, Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; and Christian Burgsmüller



From left to right: David Munn, Board of the British American Business Council, Miriam Metzger, Executive Director, German American Business Chamber ; Mario Saccasa, Senior Vice President, The Beacon Council; Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, Associate Director, MEUCE; and Christian Burgsmüller



Hon. Countess Eva Kendeffy, Consul General of Germany in Miami; and Christian Burgsmüller



Interview with Mr. Christian Burgsmüller, Counselor, Head of the Energy, Transport and Environment Section, Delegation of the EU to the US

MEUCE: *European Commission's "Energy 2020 Strategy" of 2010 recognized the need for the EU to develop new sources of energy. What concrete steps have been taking by the EU toward diversifying energy sources?*

Mr. Burgsmüller: First, we sought to push the move into renewable sources toward a home-grown basis, whether with solar panels, energy fans etc. Second, the EU has tried to diversify its import structure. We rely not only on traditional countries such as Norway, Russia or Algeria (where we have established pipeline connections), but also develop new opportunities, such as the Southern Corridor, which will allow to get gas from Azerbaijan, possible from Turkmenistan, into the EU. Last but not least, by building those energy import terminals we aim to be able to get energy from Qatar, Australia and, one day from the U.S.

MEUCE: *Obviously the EU is a diverse political entity and, as such, its newest members from the eastern part of the continent have their own concerns and interest in terms of energy policy. What do you see as being the most challenging issue(s) in bringing these countries to coordinate their energy policies with the EU's suggested objectives and strategies?*

Mr. Burgsmüller: Every EU country has its own energy mix and its own strength and weaknesses. For the East European countries, the most challenging feature is the fact that they, to a very large degree, depend on one producer, that is Russia. Depending on one supplier of energy is not a good situation in any business. I think that the East European countries, which pay very high gas prices, are therefore, particularly interested in getting alternative sources of energy. Whenever it can the EU is helping them in achieving this goal by bringing other energy sources into those countries.

MEUCE: *What is the attitude of the East European population toward green energy sources? Support? Opposition?*

Mr. Burgsmüller: In general there is a favorable attitude, the population supports the idea. In Bulgaria, for example, it was the green movement there that recent-

ly forced the Bulgarian Parliament to adopt the moratorium on fracking. Certainly, the Green movement in those countries is not as well established as in the Western European countries but we see signs of moving into a similar direction (of support for green energy).

MEUCE: *How would you describe the current stage of the EU's relations with America in the field of green energy?*

Mr. Burgsmüller: I think it is very good. Many European entrepreneurs are active in the U.S., both in the field of solar panels but especially in the wind fans (turbines?) business. For example, Danish companies are extremely active in places like Texas. The European entrepreneurs see the potential of American market and they are taking advantage of it.

MEUCE: *Russia is a major energy player in Europe. What are the main objectives of the EU-Russia relations in the energy field?*

Mr. Burgsmüller: Indeed, in the energy field Russia is, and will remain, a major player in European energy. However, like in any business relationships you want the best terms and conditions and the Europeans know that the more alternative sources of energy they have, the better they can negotiate with Russia on contracts and prices. To give a concrete example, a new pipeline was built from Russia to Germany (known as the "Northstream"), which allows more direct transit, thus solving the Ukrainian and Belarus problem. I would say that Russia will stay in the mix but perhaps not in the dominant position.

MEUCE: *Finally, do you enjoy your staying/working in the U.S? What surprises you most about Miami?*

Mr. Burgsmüller: Yes, I very much enjoy it! Let me add that I first came to the U.S as a high school junior, as an exchange student in Connecticut. I also visited Florida because my host family from Connecticut took me to Miami during spring break. This happened more twenty two years ago and I have not been here ever since. For me, the most interesting part now is not only to rediscover fun things but also to see how tremendously the city has changed!

By Lavinia Bucsa



Christian Burgsmüller
Counselor, Head of the Energy,
Transport and Environment Section
Delegation of the EU to the USA



MEUCE Outreach: Dr. Joaquín Roy Outreach Activities in Chile January 17-23, 2013



Dr. Joaquín Roy



University Concepcion



Lecture at ECSA-Diego Portales Univ.

Dr. Joaquín Roy, as Jean Monnet Chair and international columnist, carried out an outreach activities program composed of lectures, interviews and participation in several international summits held in Chile. At the University of Concepción he gave a lecture entitled “*La integración europea y la latinoamericana en tiempos de crisis y esperanza*” at the School of Law, for the occasion of the graduation ceremony of the Diploma on European Studies, offered by the Module of EU Studies, on January 17, 2013. In Santiago de Chile he gave a briefing at the Instituto de Estudios Internacionales, Universidad de Chile, on “EU Studies in the United States,” on January 21, 2013. Also in the Chilean capital, he lectured on “La UE hoy: crisis y esperanza” for the Chilean Association of European Union Studies (ECSA) at the Universidad Diego Portales.

On January 23, Dr. Roy presented a talk entitled “*La integración regional en Europa y América Latina: visión desde Estados Unidos*” at a two-day academic summit organized by the Center for European-Latin American Relations (CELARE), at the Universidad Central de Chile. This activity was a prelude to the European Union-Latin American/Caribbean summit and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), attended by sixty heads of state or government of both continents. Dr. Roy also was invited to attend the proceedings of the Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT), an annual convention of members of the EU and Latin American parliaments.



CEPAL



Meeting of Eurolat

For more information about these events, please follow the links below:
<http://www.peeudec.cl/home.html>; <http://www.iei.uchile.cl/>; <http://www.iei.uchile.cl/agenda/88206/encuentro-con-dr-joaquin-roy>

For more information about these events, please follow the links below:

<http://www.gob.cl/cumbres/celac-ue/> and http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/eurolat/default_es.htm





MEUCE Seminar: "After Santiago: Regional integration and European Union-Latin America Relations"



From left to right: Javier Pagalday-Gasterlurrutia, Deputy Consul General of Spain in Miami; Christian Leffler, Managing Director, Americas Dept., European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels, Belgium; Jorge Valdez, Executive Director, Europe-Latin America Foundation



From Left to right: Guillermo Lousteau, Inter-American Institute for Democracy, Miami; Michel Levi-Coral, Simón Bolívar Andean University, Quito, Ecuador; Pedro Miguel Montero González, Andean Parliament, Bogotá, Colombia; Rita Giacalone, University de Los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela; Alejandro Pastori, University of Uruguay



Javier Pagalday-Gasterlurrutia, Deputy Consul General of Spain in Miami (left); Christian Leffler, Managing Director, Americas Dept., European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels, Belgium

"After Santiago: Regional Integration and European Union-Latin America Relations" was the theme of a seminar to evaluate the current state of the field in the context of the EU-CELAC summit held in Santiago de Chile (January 26-28). The event was organized by the Jean Monnet Chair and the European Union Center, University of Miami (a partnership with Florida International University, and the EU Commission) and it took place at the University of Miami, School of Business Administration on Friday, March 1, 2013. Among the contributing and sponsoring institutions were: The [European External Action Service](#) (EEAS), the [Jean Monnet Program](#), the [Center for International Business Research and Education](#) (CIBER U Miami), the [Consejo Argentino de las Relaciones Internacionales](#) (CARI), the [Center for Latin American Studies](#), University of Miami, and the [Institut des Amériques](#) (Paris).

The Program was opened

by a welcome given by Leonidas Bachas, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Miami, Joseph Ganitsky, Director, CIBER, School of Business, University of Miami, and Rebecca Friedman (Co-Director, EU Center, Florida International University. Opening words were offered by Jorge Valdez, Executive Director, Europe-Latin America Foundation. Javier Pagalday-Gasterlurrutia, Deputy Consul of Spain, introduced Christian Leffler, Managing Director, Americas Department, European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels, Belgium, who gave a key note address under the theme of "The CELAC-EU Summit: a milestone in bi-regional relations". Sessions were dedicated to the following topics: "The EU and Latin America: a special relationship?", "Are some agreements more equal than others?", "South America, UNASUR, or MERCOSUR?", and "Integration or trade?" Professors

from sixteen different European and Western Hemisphere countries participated with papers. Proceedings will be published in an edited volume by the Jean Monnet Chair/EU Center, and presented on May 9, 2013 (Europe's Day) in Baltimore, Maryland, at the European Union Studies Association conference. Separate co-editions will be published by CARI, to be distributed in Latin America, and by the Institut des Amériques, for European circulation.



From left to right: Rebecca Friedman, Co-Director, MEUCE, FIU; Leonidas Bachas, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UM; Joseph Ganitsky, Director, CIBER, School of Business



Marcos Aurelio Guedes de Oliveira, Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil, presenting (right) - Orlando Jose Mejia Herrera, National Autonomous Univ. of Nicaragua (left)



Audience



Paolo Giordano, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC (left); Alejandro Pastori, University of Uruguay



Blanka Rosenstiel Lecture Series on Poland

Interview with Dr. Przemyslaw Strozek



On January 18, 2013, in partnership with the Art and Art History Department at FIU, MEUCE invited Dr. Przemyslaw Strozek, Polish Contemporary Art expert, to make a presentation on "Soccer Forever. Polish Contemporary Art and the National Game", part of the Lady Blanka Rosenstiel Lecture Series on Poland at FIU.



Dr. Przemyslaw Strozek

MEUCE: Besides your PhD in Modernist Studies and a MA in Theater Studies, you also held a MA in Polish Studies. **How do you see the link between Polish studies and theater studies, how do you approach both of them? What prompted you to focus on the topic of soccer in contemporary art?**

Dr. Strozek: I started my Polish studies at the University of Warsaw but in my fourth year of study I became more interested in the theater and art studies. I wrote my master's thesis on Avant-garde and I wanted to explore how Italian futurism affected the Polish arts. This topic became the basis for my PhD studies and I continued to explore how avant-garde changed the Polish art. But the topic of soccer and arts came to mind in 2008 after finding out that the 2012 European Football Championship will be held in Poland (and Ukraine as co-host of the event). In 2011 I started making research on the relationship between soccer and the contemporary arts. I focused not only on Poland but also on Italian futurism, Avant-garde movements, and contemporary art. I also explored the movements of the 20th century and how soccer affected the artists. I wanted to present my research on Polish reflections on soccer from a perspective that focused on soccer not as a game but as a cultural phenomenon. My intention was to show how many interesting meanings can be derived from this game.

MEUCE: *Soccer is such a big European theme. Do you see yourself interested in going beyond "the national" (i.e. Polish experience) and to think about how different cultures about soccer function in other parts of the world?*

Dr. Strozek: Yes, that would be a very interesting project. One can look at this issue from the perspective of different nationalities, for example how a French artist refers to a famous Italian football player. But I think it would be equally interesting to explore the idea of how would a scholar, not bound by nationality or national ideas, explore the international experiences of soccer.

MEUCE: *Can you talk a little bit about your future projects? What do you intend to focus on next?*

Dr. Strozek: This year, in September, I will participate in a Conference that celebrates the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Football Association which will take place at the National Museum of Football in Manchester (UK). I

will present my research on Polish contemporary art references to soccer. The other projects are more related to Avant-garde studies. More specifically, I will look at how popular culture (for example Hollywood stars, or soccer and sports in general) affected the Avant-garde artists in the period between 1920-1930.

MEUCE: *Is this your first visit in Miami? In Florida? In the U.S.?*

Dr. Strozek: This has been my very first time in the U.S. The Fulbright Foundation gave me the opportunity to come to America as a 2012/2013 Visiting Scholar at the University of Georgia, in Athens. This represented a great opportunity for me to collaborate with American universities and American scholars, to travel throughout the U.S., give talks to conferences. At one of these conferences, I met Dr. Jacek Kolasinski, Chair of FIU's Department of Art and Art History, with whom I stayed in contact. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Kolasinski for organizing my stay here and MEUCE for inviting me to FIU.

I forgot to mention that last December I attended the Art Basel Show in Miami Beach, the biggest art fair in the world, and I was impressed! I saw a lot of works I have never seen before.

MEUCE: *Do you play soccer?*

Dr. Strozek: I play sometimes, but only for fun. I prefer to watch a game on television!

By Lavinia Bucsa



From left to right: Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, Dr. Kolasinski, Beata Paszyc, Dr. Przemyslaw Strozek



Blanka Rosenstiel Lecture Series on Poland

Interview with Dr. Anna Grzymala-Busse, Univ. of Michigan



On January 22, 2013, Dr. Anna Grzymala-Busse, University of Michigan made a presentation on "Church and State in Poland", part of the Lady Blanka Rosenstiel Lecture Series on Poland at FIU. We had a chance to interview Dr. Grzymala-Busse.



Dr. Grzymala-Busse
Univ. of Michigan

MEUCE: *You pointed out during your presentation that religiosity is a question of historical context, and that the relationship between church and state has been (is) a conflictual one. In your view, what role, if any, did the regime type play in shaping the relationship between Church and State throughout Eastern Europe - and I am thinking also of the other non-Catholic, but nonetheless, Orthodox, countries such as Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania?*

Dr. Grzymala-Busse: The relationship between the church and state, both in Catholic and non-Catholic countries, was definitely more hostile during the communist period and less so afterward. But, fundamentally, I think it is shaped by the historical relationship between religion and the state rather than between religion and the regime type. The Roman-Catholic Church always has been seen as most popular and most respected when it stayed out of politics. The Orthodox Church has always been allied with the state and has always been part of the government structure. These fundamentals have not changed. They might have been intensified under communism but they have not really changed the fundamental relationship.

MEUCE: *In the present context of the European Union, how do you see the evolution of the church-state relations both in Poland and, more broadly, throughout the newest members of the Union?*

Dr. Grzymala-Busse: I think that there could be two different reactions. On one hand, if the EU is perceived to be threatening national identity and national interest, then there could be a tightening of the bond between society and church. If, on the other hand, society or large groups in society feel that their interests are better represented in a secular, more cosmopolitan EU, then the bond between the Church and society will loosen. Therefore, a lot has to do with how the relations of the EU to the national interest of these countries is perceived by these societies.

MEUCE: *Religion and politics can be a volatile combination, as you rightly mentioned. What are the major differences between the way religion and politics interact in the U.S. and in Europe?*

Dr. Grzymala-Busse: I think the U.S. is different from Europe in two respects. First, there is a much structured division between state and church in the U.S than there is in Europe. Second, and related to the first, there is a religious marketplace in the U.S that does not exist in Europe. To illustrate: in the U.S., if you have enough adherents, you can call yourself a religion, and people flow pretty freely from one religion to another. There is nothing strange about converting to different religions because one does not really lose one's

identity. This is especially the case among protestants who can very freely move from one religion to another, so that it reflects their own world views and personal preferences. In Europe, by contrast, it is much harder to switch religions; a lot of times religion is associated with national identity and there are numerous cases where the state sponsors the official church. Tax payers' money, whether they like it or not, will go to support the church. There is much division between the support of the state for the churches, and a much greater religion marketplace, which means that religions are allowed to function much more freely in the U.S. They can also make all kinds of demands, some of which are met, some of which are not, whereas in Europe that relationship is much more constrained by the legal and political considerations.

MEUCE: *Will this have an impact on the religion's ability to shape policy?*

Dr. Grzymala-Busse: It might, in the sense that, in the U.S., churches are perceived as legitimate interest groups who can lobby for policy issues, whereas in Europe they have to work through different channels in order to get the policy aims accomplished.

MEUCE: *You are a renowned and a well respected scholar. What is next on your research agenda?*

Dr. Grzymala-Busse: Well, currently I am finishing up this new book on religion and politics in Europe and beyond. My next project is going to be about the importance of historical and geographical boundaries and how their shift does, or does not, have an impact on domestic politics. I am thinking of several cases where national boundaries in Europe have shifted but political behavior (voting and organizational patterns, for example) is nonetheless maintained as if those boundaries have not shifted. I am interested in seeing why that is so.

MEUCE: *A final question: when should we expect its publication?*

Dr. Grzymala-Busse: Hopefully next year (laughing)! Will see how quickly I can work!

By Lavinia Bucsa



Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, Honorary Consul of Poland (right), attended Dr. Grzymala-Busse's presentation "Church and State in Poland", and kindly congratulated her.



Interview with Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Jagiellonian University

On February 19, 2013, Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Director, Center for Holocaust Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, was invited to FIU by the Miami-Florida European Union Center for Excellence, and the Jewish Studies Program to discuss "Presence and Absence: Jews in Consciousness of Young Poles". This presentation was made possible by the Campus Outreach Lecture Program of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for advanced Holocaust Studies, supported by the generosity of Jerome A. Yavitz Charitable Foundation, Inc. and Arlyn S. and Stephen H. Cypen. The talk was co-sponsored by the European Studies Program, the MEUCE, and was part of the spring 2013 Lecture Series, "Material and Visual Culture of the Holocaust", supported in part by Targum Shlishi, A. Raquel and Ayreh Rubin Foundation.



From left to right; Dr. Oren Stier, Dr. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Dr. Rebecca Friedman



Dr. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs
Jagiellonian University



Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs
Jagiellonian University

MEUCE: During your presentation, you mentioned the importance of "local knowledge" in learning about the past. **How is this "local knowledge" brought to surface in Poland in such a degree as to make a difference?**

Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs: It very often happens because of the local historians. School teachers or even students are interested in a material object about Jewish history and culture. Sometimes this happens instantly. For example, students from a small town in Silesia were interested in STRANGE stones in a nearby hill and they asked their history teacher about the meaning of those stones. The local teacher had to first educate herself in order to provide an answer. This teacher eventually became so interested in the Jewish history and culture that she begun to participate in numerous national and international seminars. At the same time, she initi-

ated many other projects with her students. In this example, first there were in-school projects but later, the teacher and students began to educate the whole community. Many historical sites were discovered as a result of grass-root movements with local, very passionate individuals. There are probably over a thousand such individuals.

MEUCE: *Tell me a little about your methodology? How do you combine quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of ethnic attitudes, for example?*

Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs: I think that quantitative studies are not enough. Actually, I personally like to triangulate, to use various methods to confirm a theory, or to check a hypothesis. I also think that sometimes quantitative data do not support one theory, which can be supported by qualitative data, and vice versa. This is so because in the study of history and attitudes, our methodology is usually limited; the data can not be completely reliable. Therefore, quantitative data should be supplemented by qualitative data coming from focus groups, individual interviews, or participant observation.

MEUCE: *Do you see a change in Poles' attitude towards others since Poland joined the EU in 2004?*

Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs: Surveys towards ethnic minorities started in the 70s in Poland. When

trends are compared, there seems to be less ethnocentrism and anti-Semitism. The changes are modest but during the past 13 years, Polish people's attitudes are more open and the society became more tolerant and less anti-Semitic. Before 2004, the ethnocentrism was quite significant and people were afraid that there was going to be a significant flow of immigrants and foreigners. Obviously, this did not happen in Poland so people just stopped worrying so much.

MEUCE: *What would you like the FIU students mostly to take away from today's presentation?*

Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs: First, the idea that the memory formation process is dynamic. We need various methodologies to study the identity and memory. We should not stick to one result of one particular empirical study or another and we should always take into account context and history. Second, and to paraphrase Gordon Allport, prejudices are not easily diminishing. They need our constant attention and a lot of personal inner work. Collective memories are extremely important to create an inclusive society. Young people also have to learn that memories can be very easily distorted. Therefore, our personal and interpersonal relations and awareness toward who we are, IS crucial for the future of our communities and our personal development.

MEUCE Lecture: The Hermetic Imagination in the High and Late Enlightenment



Dr. Peter Hanns Reill

Dr. Peter Hanns Reill, a distinguished professor in the department of History at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), and currently a senior fellow at SIPA (FIU), devoted his entire academic career to teaching and researching the history of thought. At the beginning of March, he visited FIU and was welcomed by an impressive number of listeners. Dr. Reill give a lecture on “The Hermetic Imagination in the High and Late Enlightenment.”

A specialist on the intellectual history of eighteenth-century Europe with an emphasis on Germany, France and Great Britain, Dr. Reill has focused upon the intersection between science and culture and is also working on a study of the widespread appeal of hermetic thought in the last half of the eighteenth century. Dr. Reill has held fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Fulbright-Hayes Program, the Max-Planck Institut für Geschichte in Göttingen, and the Center for Advanced Studies in Munich. He is the past president of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and has been elected a member of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences.

After a warm introduction by the SIPA Director, Dr. John F. Stack and by Dr. Rebecca Friedman, MEUCE Co-Director, the Californian scholar begun his presentation by telling the audience that in the mid-to late eighteenth century her-

metic and alchemical practices were widespread. In the age of reason, historians have rarely explained the popularity of these phenomena. Instead, they were tending to bifurcate them from Enlightenment thought and culture. More recent pioneering work however, has sought to remedy this neglect by conceiving hermetic and alchemical phenomena as part of a coherent worldview called “esotericism.” In contrast, Dr. Reill’s approach sought to blur the distinction between Enlightenment and esotericism. He asserted that certain types of thought and action appeared esoteric in form, yet drew upon a set of Enlightenment assumptions concerning nature and humanity. Dr. Reill calls this “hermeneutic imagination” that engaged vitalist principles. The lecture was highly appreciated and stimulated a lively discussion with FIU faculty and students.

By Lavinia Bucsa



Audience



Interview with Sarah Beringer, Visiting Scholar Department of Politics and International Relations, FIU



MEUCE: You are doing your PhD at the Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany. Why did you chose to come, as a visiting scholar, to FIU and Miami?

Sarah Beringer: My research focuses on economic relations between Europe, the U.S and Latin America and I wanted to go "outside the bubble" and see what actually happens in the countries I am doing research on. Miami is a place where I have both: I have the U.S and the presence of a lot of Latin American (and European) businesses. The connections between them makes a very interesting case for my research. Obviously, I bring a German perspective to the topic I am interested in and there are German scholars doing research in this field. However, this is a limited perspective. I wanted to move a step further and to reach out to people who have actually lived the issues I am doing research on. To this end, I have been in touch with scholars from the U.S and Latin America but also with people who work in the field of my interest. I also talk to people here in Miami, and I had the opportunity to attend lectures and talks of guest speakers and I benefit a lot from having access to the FIU Library. During my six-month stay at FIU, I had a very beneficial and enriching experience.

MEUCE: Has your initial perspective on the topic changed since you came here? In what way?

Sarah Beringer: Yes, it has changed. I first thought that I should focus on trade policy but then I

learned that investment is now just as important as trade. Therefore, I have included the investment side into my research. I realized that there is a lot of Latin American businesses investing in the U.S, whereas I was taught to reasoning the other way around. Because the U.S does not have a trade policy agenda with Latin America - focusing instead more on Asia - a lot of businesses from Latin America are investing here in the U.S. I

U.S., I found very interesting the fact that what we did (our business) was so much affected by the political environment in each country. I am still interested in these relations and this interest pretty much started my academic career.

MEUCE : Beyond finishing the dissertation, what are your career plans for the future?

Sarah Beringer: As much as I enjoy being an academic, given my business academic background and having worked for companies, I think I would like to go back to the private sector and apply what I have learned to a more practical level. I would also like to keep my connections with academia and perhaps I will teach for a while.

MEUCE: Do you like Miami?

Sarah Beringer: I like Miami a lot! It is a very global and diverse city, with people from all over the world, and I enjoy getting in contact with people from various cultures. I like this diversity. In particular, I like being here because you do not feel like a stranger, it is

a very cosmopolitan city, where one can easily "blend in." Other places do not have the same feeling. I also like the school a lot. I came from a state school myself and I think that FIU is doing a wonderful job in creating so many opportunities for its students. I feel very welcome and I really enjoy being here!

By Lavinia Bucsa



did not expect to find this but it is what my research shows.

MEUCE : You worked in the private sector for a while before starting your PhD. How does that stage of your career connect with your current research interests?

Sarah Beringer: My research interests actually started while working there. I have an undergraduate and master's degree in business administration and I worked at Zimmens in the business development area. While doing business development for European countries and the



MEUCE Lecture: "Corruption and Popular Attitudes about National Institutions and the EU"



On March 7, at FIU's Green Library 220, MEUCE, together with European Studies Program and European Student Association invited Dr. Tatiana Kostadinova, Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations (FIU) to present her most recent research on corruption. With this occasion, and in the context of her most recent book (*Political corruption in Eastern Europe. Politics after communism*), Dr. Kostadinova gave a lecture titled: "Corruption and popular attitudes about national institutions and the EU."

Dr. Kostadinova noted that,

over the last decade, corruption has been one of the most serious problems facing the democratic transitions of East European countries, a phenomenon with important consequences not only for the level of economic growth and foreign investments, but also for the quality of democracy and the future of the newly established institutions. Corruption also seems to be one of the biggest challenges facing Europe as a whole. Among other consequences, corruption can undermine trust in democratic/EU institutions, and weaken the accountability of political leadership.

These concerns are reinforced by attitudinal trends shown in various Eurobarometer surveys. The 2011 findings showed that the majority (74 percent) of Europeans believed that corruption is a major problem for their country – a slightly more positive opinion than in 2009 (78 percent). In addition, about half of Europeans thought that the level of corruption in their country has increased over the

past three years. Although the data indicated a slightly improvement since 2009, the majority of Europeans also believed that there is corruption within EU institutions, and that bribery and the abuse of positions of power take place in all areas of public service.

Another interesting fact is that there is variation of opinions between the old and new EU member states. Respondents in the "old" EU countries were less likely to believe that corruption is a major national problem than their counterparts in newly admitted EU countries. Here, in most of the new EU members from Eastern Europe (i.e. Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic) almost all respondents agreed that corruption is a major problem for their countries, at all levels.

In June 2011, the European Commission set up a mechanism for the periodic assessment of EU states' efforts in fighting corruption.

By Lavinia Bucsa

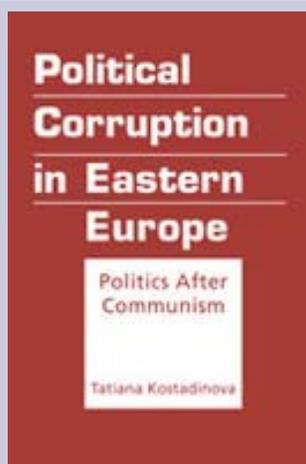
Book Announcement

"A valuable analysis ... ambitious and convincing."—Rasma Karklins, University of Illinois at Chicago



Dr. Tatiana Kostadinova

Dr. Tatiana Kostadinova is Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Florida International University. She is the author of *Bulgaria 1879–1946: The Challenge of Choice* (Columbia University Press). Other publications include book chapters on political representation, and numerous journal articles in *American Journal of Political Science*, *Electoral Studies*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *European Journal of Political Research*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Party Politics*, and *Europe-Asia Studies*.



Imprint: Lynne Rienner
Published: April, 2012
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ISBN: 978-1-58826-811-2

Why has political corruption emerged as a major obstacle to successful democratic consolidation in Eastern Europe? Exploring the origins, scope, and impact of political corruption in the region's post communist states, Kostadinova identifies the factors that favor illicit behavior and considers how the various forms of malfeasance are threatening democracy. Rich cross-national data and an in-depth study of Bulgaria reveal how parties and their leaders have exploited the transitional environment for private benefit, as well as how domestic and external forces—including the EU integration process—are constraining corruption. Kostadinova's conclusions point to the policy-relevant implications of her study for Eastern Europe, and for transitional democracies around the world.

Synopsis by Lynne Rienner

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SOME OF OUR UPCOMING 2013 EVENTS



- March 14** **Local Florida Euro Challenge Competition 2013**
- March 21** **Lecture on “Innovation and Competitiveness in Europe”**
 by Valérie Rouxel-Laxton, Head of the Economic and Financial Affairs Section,
 Delegation of the European Union to the USA.
- March 21-22** **Two-day EU Conference “Comparative Regional Perspectives on
 Innovation in Single/Common Markets”**
- April 26** **Journalists Seminar**
- April 30** **Local Florida Euro Challenge Competition Award Ceremony at the
 Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Miami Branch**
- May 6-10** **European Short Film Festival**
- May 9** **Celebration of Europe Day**
- May 10** **Italian Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero**

For details please visit: miamieuc.fiu.edu - Events
 or contact Christine I. Caly-Sanchez at calyc@fiu.edu