

GREEK
POLITICS



SPECIALIST
GROUP

GPSG NEWSLETTER #15

FEBRUARY 2009

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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 15th Newsletter of the **Greek Politics Specialist Group (GPSG)**.

The last few months have been the most exciting and productive yet for our Group, as we are celebrating the successful completion of the **International Conference: “Images of Nations: Strategic Communication, Soft Power and the Media”** organised by the GPSG under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On behalf of the Organising Committee, I would like to extend my **gratitude** to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its support, as well as to all of our distinguished guests and speakers for making this such a truly special event. There are many people who worked very hard to realise this project, but I would particularly like to thank our colleague Achilleas Ioakimides, who made this conference possible in the first place. In this edition of the newsletter you can find the list of speakers and presentations, as well as links to our **photo gallery** from the conference and our archive of **media coverage** both of which are available on our website. We are pleased to announce that a number of conference **presentations** are now available in powerpoint format on the conference website, while we are currently working on the publication of an edited volume based on the conference **proceedings**.

Other items on the agenda include a review of our papers at the **Joint Specialist Group Conference on “The Changing Constellation of the Enlarging EU”** to the organising of which the Group took a leading role; a presentation of our panels at the forthcoming **59th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association**, as well as updates on our other activities, featured publications and upcoming events.

As always, **your contributions**, ideas and comments are always welcome and crucial to the development of our work. The GPSG is only as good as its **members' input** and there are many ways in which you can contribute, such as submitting a short article for our website, bringing us in touch with potential sponsors and taking part in our competitions and events. Last but certainly not least, if you haven't already done so, please remember to complete the **online membership form**, which helps us stay in touch. By joining us as a Full Member you also get a range of benefits, such as priority access to our events, eligibility for funding support and inclusion to the media 'Experts' service.

The **Greek Politics Specialist Group (GPSG)** of the UK's Political Studies Association (PSA) was founded in 2004.

It is one of the largest and most active groups of the PSA and a leading, international network of scholars and researchers of Greek society, government and politics.

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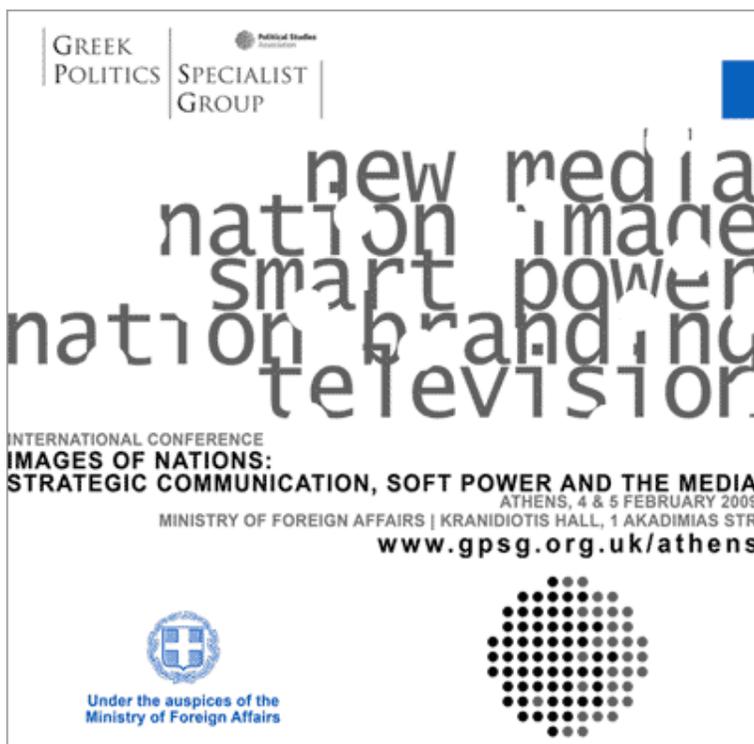
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International Conference Images of Nations: Strategic Communication, Soft Power and the Media

4-5 February 2009,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Athens, Greece

This international conference, organised by the GPSG under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought together leading academics and practitioners in order to examine the construction and management of nations' images through such practices as media representation, public diplomacy, nation branding, soft power and strategic communications.



PHOTOS: ILIAS KOTSIREAS



powerpoint presentations now available at: <http://www.gpsg.org.uk/athens/>



photo gallery: <http://www.gpsg.org.uk/aboutgallery.html>

media coverage: <http://www.gpsg.org.uk/aboutmedia.html>

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Conference Programme – Day 1

Opening Address: Mrs Dora Bakoyiannis, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Keynote Speech 1: Prof. Philip Taylor (University of Leeds, UK) gave the opening keynote speech, entitled "A Strategic Communications (Road) Map"

Panel 1: The Internet as a Tool of Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy

Roman Gerodimos (University of Bournemouth), "Online Mobilisation and Citizen Diplomacy"

Dr. Athina Karatzogianni (University of Hull), "Small States, Big Opportunities: Challenges and Solutions for Greece in Cyberspace"

Dr. Anastasia Kavada (University of Westminster), "Networking Technologies for Collective Action: Two Opposing Models of Activism"

Maria Zisouli (University of Athens), "Diaspora and Online News Media: an Analysis of the December 2008 riots"

Nikos Drandakis, (www.nylon.gr), "Losing Control"

Moderator: **Prof. Georgios Pleios**

Panel 2: Images of Nations in the News

Prof. Thimios Zaharopoulos (Park University), "Images of Nations in the News: The Image of Greece in the United States"

Michael Gawthorne (Media Tenor), "An Approach to Setting the Agenda"

Dr. Athanassios N. Samaras (Hellenic Audiovisual Institute), "The Effect of News Events upon Nation Images: The Case Study of the Image of the USA in the Greek Press"

Prof. Georgios Pleios (University of Athens), "Images of Europe, Images of EU in Greek Television News"

Maria Xenofontos (EMME) and **Christina Prassou** (MatrixMedia), "The Effect of the December Riots upon the Image of Greece: The News Coverage of International Media - a Quantitative Analysis"

Moderator: **Giorgos Kapopoulos**

Panel 3: The International Relations Approach: Images of Nations and "Soft Power"

Prof. Panayiotis Ifestos (University of Piraeus), "Soft Power in Contemporary International Politics"

Prof. Haralambos Papatiriu (Panteion University), "Hegemonic Authority and International Legitimacy"

Prof. Marios Evriviades (Panteion University), "USA: Soft Power or Propaganda"

Prof. Aristotle Tziampiris (University of Piraeus), "The European Union, Islam and Turkey: Finding the Limits of European Soft Power"

Moderator: **Dr. Andrew N. Liaropoulos**

– Day 2

Keynote Speech 2: Prof. Keith Dinnie (Temple University, Japan) give the keynote speech on the second day of the conference, entitled "Nation Branding and Country Image: Opportunities and limitations of a media-centric approach"

Panel 4: Strategic Communication Approaches: From Public Diplomacy and Lobbying to "Nation Branding"

Prof. Roy Panagiotopoulou (University of Athens), "Olympic Games Promotion Strategy of Country Image for Greece and China"

Prof. Christodoulos Yiallouridis (Panteion University), "Cultural Diplomacy and National Identity: A Dynamic Relation of Interdependence in the Era of Globalization"

Dr. Panayiotis Theodorakopoulos (Ambassador, Diplomatic Academy), "Lobbying as an Aspect of Public Diplomacy and the Construction of Dynamism as a Nation Image Attribute"

Igor Mintusov (CEO, Niccolo M), "Forming the International Image of Russia: Strategy and Corporate Communications"

Dr. Ozlem Sandikci (Bilkent University), "Tourism Promotion and Nation Branding"

Prof. Nadia Kaneva (Denver University), "Critical Reflections on Nation Branding as Discourse and Practice"

Moderator: **Dr. Athanassios N. Samaras**

Ministerial Address: Mr. Konstantinos Gkioulekas, Minister for the Media

Panel 5: The Institutional Approach: Policy Formulation in Greece

George Koumoutsakos, Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Thomas Miller, Counsellor for Public Affairs, US Embassy in Athens

Vasily Gavrilov, Press Attache, Russian Embassy in Athens

Moderator: **Werner Van Gent**, President of the Foreign Press Association in Greece

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“The Changing Constellation of the Enlarging EU”

Joint Conference of the Greek Politics, French Politics and Policy, German Politics and Italian Politics Specialist Groups

23 January 2009, Durham University



The recent waves of enlargement towards ten Central and Eastern European and two South-Eastern European countries have fundamentally altered the size and the nature of the European Union. The Single Market of 27 member states now represents the largest and most densely populated integrated economic area in the world and the EU has become one of the major international organisations with increasing levels of policy coordination amongst its member states. Further waves of enlargement towards the Balkan countries, Turkey and former Soviet Union states like the Ukraine would substantially increase the political and socio-economic diversity of the EU.

This conference, organized jointly by four of the PSA's European specialist groups, adopted an original perspective and concentrated on a comprehensive analysis of the changing power balance within the EU-27. The conference, funded partly through the PSA's Specialist Activities Fund, brought together a range of national and comparative analyses and examined the ways new member states are influencing the EU policy agenda and how the original EU-15 member states respond to this process.

The Greek Politics Specialist Group took a leading role in the organizing of the conference and presented **four papers** on: the Greek perspective and experience of enlargement (focusing on Europeanization, policy transfer and decentralization), Bulgaria's accession and industrial restructuring, and the issue of Turkey's possible accession to the EU.

 **Dr. Dimitris Tsarouhas (Assistant Professor at Bilkent University)**
“Turkey and the Future of EU Enlargement”

In his presentation, Dimitris Tsarouhas reviewed the current stalemate in EU-Turkey relations and identified some of the mechanisms responsible for that. He went on to argue that from the viewpoint of the Turkish government and civil society, the salience of the EU factor in accelerating necessary political and economic reforms has considerably diminished, and that Turkey's complicated, domestic political turmoil will continue for some time. This could in the long run undermine EU-Turkey relations further, with unpredictable consequences. After outlining a series of possible scenarios and stressing the importance of Turkey regarding our contemporary understanding of enlargement, Tsarouhas asserted that Turkish EU accession is ultimately a 'win-win' scenario for all sides concerned, and that keeping Turkey 'on track' is today the Union's foremost enlargement policy challenge.

 **Dr. Stella Ladi (Public Policy Expert at the Greek Ministry of the Interior)**
“Europeanization and Policy Transfer: A Comparative Study of Policy Change in Greece and Cyprus”

There has been a growing academic interest in processes of Europeanization and their impact upon policy making although there have been a few attempts to link the phenomenon of Europeanization with policy transfer per se. The aim of the paper is to contribute to this growing body of literature by studying processes of policy change in an 'old' and a 'new' Eastern

Mediterranean EU member-state. The theoretical aim of the paper is to evaluate the Europeanization and the policy transfer frameworks and to conclude about their usefulness and possible methods of combining them.

The argument put forward in this paper is that the two frameworks although they describe similar processes they serve different analytical purposes. The Europeanization framework is more useful for the analysis of cases where the EU plays a central role in the process of transfer while the policy transfer framework has more to offer to the discussion of case where no concrete European model exists and a 'search' for ideas and best practices in different national contexts takes place. Nevertheless, the PTN approach can offer more depth in the analysis of all cases of Europeanization because it can shed light to the processes, stages, agents and networks of policy change. Furthermore, three specific hypotheses with theoretical, empirical and policy implications are explored. The first hypothesis is that Europeanization is a two-way process, more so in the case of old EU member states than of new member states. The second hypothesis is that Europeanization affects EU member-states but also candidate countries. Finally, the third hypothesis concerns the importance of the informal dimensions of Europeanization and thus of 'soft' mechanisms of policy transfer. The paper is empirically supported by the existing literature on Europeanization in Greece and Cyprus.

 **Diana Bozhilova (A.C. Laskaridis Research Fellow, Hellenic Observatory, LSE)**
"Bulgaria's Accession, Industrial Restructuring and Greek FDI"

Bulgaria's path to EU membership has been uneven. This in itself is not a novelty where a process of EU-Europeanization runs in parallel to an open-market transition. However, the expectation amongst scholars is that in such cases the former stands to provide incentives and remedies to the latter. Yet, this paper finds that there is little evidence to support such an argument in the case of Bulgaria's industrial restructuring. The evidence points overwhelmingly to a positive effect on the balance of payments for the state as a result of EU-Europeanization in industry but a deterioration of the state's fiscal position. What emerges as the factor that makes all the difference is the inflow of FDI. Greece has established itself as both a regional and an EU leader in this field. Importantly, still, is the fact that Greek FDI fall in the group of strategic, non-speculative investments. These findings posit an important question as to the effectiveness and efficiency of the distribution of EU accession funds, as well as whether EU-Europeanization is not in important areas of the benchmarks better served through a process of regional integration.

 **Vasilis Leontitsis (PhD Candidate, University of Sheffield)**
"Decentralising Greece Against the Background of the EU"

The paper is about the decentralisation process in Greece since the early 1980s seen within the context of Greece's membership into the European Union. It is argued that the territorial restructuring of the country has only been partially influenced by the EU membership. However, to the extent that the EU has mattered, the influence can be traced (a) on the effects Greece's continuing membership has had on its own polity and (b) on the effects consecutive enlargements have had on it. The former is responsible for most of the reforms related to the introduction and further strengthening of the regional tier of the country, whereas the latter has had more indirect influence mainly due to the changing allocation of resources within the EU. On the whole, the paper concludes that the Greek membership into the EU has had far-reaching consequences, since it has even affected elements of its polity.

More info @ http://www.gpsg.org.uk/docs/GPSG_Durham_Conference_Programme.pdf

**59th Annual Conference of the
Political Studies Association
Challenges for Democracy in a Global Era
7 – 9 April 2009
Manchester Conference Centre, UK**



We live, it is said, in a global era characterised by a reduction in state sovereignty, an increase in global information flows, an upsurge in international migration, ever-growing economic interdependence, the appearance of global political issues, and a changing security environment. All of these developments pose challenges for democracy, both in theory and in practice. The aim of the 2009 annual conference is to encourage reflection on and responses to the challenges democracy faces.

**Provisional programme now available at:
<http://www.psa.ac.uk/2009/programme.html>**



GPSG Panels at the 2009 PSA Annual Conference

GPSG Panel 1 – Democracy and Youth Activism in Greece

Panel Convenor: Dr Dimitris Tsarouhas (Bilkent University)

Chair & Discussant: Dora Giannaki (Queen Mary, University of London)

Presenters:

N. Nyfoudis (University of Crete), "Can European Youth Policy be related to the Europeanization of young people? Case study: the implementation of the Youth Programme in Greece".

I. Theocharis (University College London), "Young People, Postmaterialism and Online Political activism: the Greek Case"

R. Gerodimos (Bournemouth University), "Youth Civic Attitudes in a Segmented Public Sphere: Challenges and Prospects"

GPSG Panel 2 – Greek Politics & Political Marketing

Panel Convenor: Dr Dimitris Tsarouhas (Bilkent University)

Chair: Roman Gerodimos (Bournemouth University)

Discussant: Prof. T. Chadjipadelis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Presenters:

Dr. I. Andreadis, Prof. T. Chadjipadelis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), “Parliamentary Elections in Greece: ecological analysis and ecological inference”

A. Pistolas (University of Gloucestershire), “Political marketing and its impact on voting behavior in Greece: An analysis of the Greek electorate’s voting behaviour”

M. Zisouli (University of Athens), “Challenges in new political area: The Greek socialist party (PASOK) and its reformation strategy”

Dr. A. Vallianatou and M. Petrelli (University of Athens), “The implications of the Lisbon Treaty on the Greek foreign and defence policy”

Guidelines for participants:

- After 31 December 2008, **cancellation** is likely to result in proposals for future conferences being rejected.
- **Late booking surcharge** (£40) applies from 14 February 2009
- The **final date for submission** of an electronic version of paper to PSA is Friday, 20 March 2009.
- Online registration at: <http://www.psa.ac.uk/2009/bookings.htm>
- According to the new PSA regulations, all delegates must be registered members of the PSA. Please note that this is different from being a member of the GPSG.

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**GPSG Panel at the International Conference
“The Challenge of Reform in Greece, 1974 –
2009: Assessments and Prospects”**

8 – 10 May 2009, Yale University, USA

http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/hsp/greek_reform.html



Call for Sponsors

The Greek Politics Specialist Group will be represented at the forthcoming Yale Conference by three distinguished scholars presenting papers on the role of Europeanization in Greek public policy reform.

We kindly invite affiliate organisations, public bodies and educational foundations which may be interested in sponsoring the GPSG’s panel at the Yale Conference. For more information, please contact us at: rgerodimos@gmail.com

GPSG Panel Title:

“The Politics of Reform in Greece and the Role of Europeanization”

Featured Papers:

Prof. Kostas Lavdas (University of Crete), “The Variegated Limits to Reform: Europeanization and Public Policy Instrumentation in Greek Reform Processes”

Dr. Stella Ladi (Greek Ministry of the Interior & Sheffield University, UK), “Soft Europeanization and Institutional Reform: The Transfer of the Ombudsman Institution to Greece”

Dr. Dimitris Tsarouhas (Bilkent University), “Intentions, Policies, Impasse: PASOK and Welfare Reform in Greece”

Members' Activities

- ✚ **Dr. Andrew Liaropoulos** will be attending a three week course titled '*US and EU Security Issues*' that will be held in Washington DC, 20 April – 8 May 2009. The course is sponsored by the U.S Government and will focus on ethnic conflict, terrorism, the new role of NATO and European Security.



- ✚ **Dora Giannaki** will participate in the second international workshop on '*The History of youth work in Europe and its relevance for today's youth work policy*', organized by the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. The workshop will take place in Belgium, from 25 to 28 May 2009, and will be attended by researchers, policy-makers and youth work practitioners (trainers, representatives of NGOs, youth workers/leaders) from different European countries in order to discuss the history of youth work and its relevance to contemporary youth policies. This will lead on to a conference on the same topic under Belgium's Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2010. The results of the two workshops will be documented in a comprehensive report and will be uploaded shortly on the website of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.



YouthPartnership

More info @ <http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/index.html>

- ✚ **Roman Gerodimos** is taking part in the concluding stage of an EU-wide project evaluating inclusion measures taken in schools for primary and secondary education. The project is run by the Netherlands-based DOCA-BUREAUS, with which the GPSG has established a working relationship.



More info @ <http://www.docabureaus.nl/INTMEAS.html>

Featured Publications



Τηλεοπτική Πολιτική Διαφήμιση στην Ελλάδα

Αθανάσιος Ν. Σαμαράς

Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη

Αθήνα 2009

ISBN: 978-960-03-4842-2

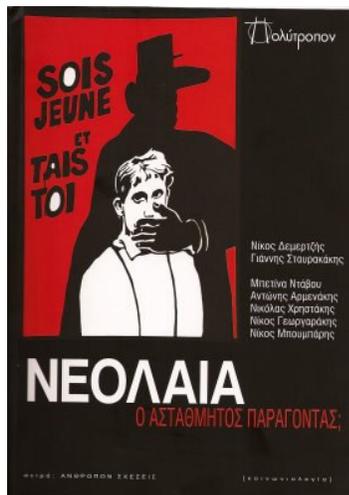
Σελ. 288

Τιμή: € 15,00

Στο βιβλίο αυτό χρησιμοποιούνται οι θεωρίες και οι μέθοδοι της επικοινωνιολογίας για τη μελέτη της τηλεοπτικής πολιτικής διαφήμισης στην Ελλάδα. Η έρευνα έρχεται να καλύψει ένα κενό στην ελληνική βιβλιογραφία και φιλοδοξεί να λειτουργήσει ως πρότυπο για ποσοτικές αναλύσεις περιεχομένου στην πολιτική επικοινωνία. Στο πρώτο μέρος γίνεται παρουσίαση του ευρύτερου πλαισίου μέσα στο οποίο ικανοποιούνται οι επικοινωνιακές ανάγκες

της πολιτικής και διασαφηνίζεται η σχέση της πολιτικής διαφήμισης με την εμπορευματοποίηση του ραδιοηλεκτρονικού συστήματος, τη λογική του μέσου και το πολιτικό μάρκετινγκ. Στη συνέχεια παρέχεται ένα συγκροτημένο θεωρητικό πλαίσιο για τις επιδράσεις της πολιτικής διαφήμισης στο ακροατήριο, τα ερμηνευτικά πλαίσια που διέπουν το περιεχόμενό της και τις δομικές επιπτώσεις που έχει στο κομματικό σύστημα. Στο τρίτο κεφάλαιο παρουσιάζεται η ποσοτική ανάλυση των χαρακτηριστικών των ελληνικών πολιτικών διαφημιστικών της περιόδου 1993-2007. Συγκεκριμένα, εξετάζονται η βασική μορφή, το ρητορικό στυλ, η χρήση των μηχανισμών πειθούς, καθώς και το στοιχείο της εικόνας σε συνδυασμό με τις θεματικές αναφορές. Επίσης, διερευνώνται οι εκφάνσεις του αρνητισμού στην πολιτική διαφήμιση και η στρατηγική κινητοποίηση του παρελθόντος και του μέλλοντος μέσω της πολιτικής διαφήμισης.

Ο Αθανάσιος Ν. Σαμαράς είναι κάτοχος διδακτορικού στην Πολιτική Επικοινωνία από το University of Sussex (Αγγλία), μεταπτυχιακού στην Πολιτική Επικοινωνία από το Emerson College (ΗΠΑ) και στην Επικοινωνιακή Πολιτική από το City University (Αγγλία), καθώς και πτυχίου Οικονομικών από το Πανεπιστήμιο Πειραιά. Έχει δημοσιεύσει δεκατρία άρθρα σε διεθνή επιστημονικά περιοδικά και σε βιβλία. Έχει κάνει παρουσιάσεις σε περισσότερα από πενήντα συνέδρια. Έργα του έχουν μεταφραστεί στα ρωσικά και στα τουρκικά. Είναι συνεργάτης του Ινστιτούτου Οπτικοακουστικών Μέσων και διδάσκει στο Πανεπιστήμιο Πειραιά. Έχει διεκπεραιώσει προεκλογικές εκστρατείες στην Ελλάδα και στην Κύπρο. Ο Δρ. Σαμαράς είναι μέλος της Επιστημονικής Επιτροπής του Greek Politics Specialist Group.



Νεολαία: Ο Αστάθμητος Παράγοντας **Νίκος Δεμερτζής, Γιάννης Σταυρακάκης (επιμ.)**

Εκδόσεις Πολύτροπον
Αθήνα 2008

ISBN: 978-960-8354-85-2

Σελ. 256

Τιμή: € 20,00

Συγγραφική ομάδα:

Μπέτινα Ντάβου, Αντώνης Αρμενάκης, Νικόλας Χρηστάκης, Νίκος Γεωργαράκης, Νίκος Μπουμπάρης

Σήμερα όλοι μιλούν για τους νέους ή εξ ονόματος των νέων. Σπανια όμως αποτυπώνονται οι γνώμες των ίδιων των νέων, σπάνια αναδεικνύεται ο λόγος τους, οι στάσεις και οι αναπαραστάσεις τους, οι αγωνίες και τα ερίσματά τους, οι ανασφάλεις και οι ελπίδες τους.

Τούτη η μελέτη επιχειρεί να ανα-συνθέσει και να ερμηνεύσει ορισμένες κομβικές στάσεις και αναπαραστάσεις της νέας γενιάς όπως αρθρώνονται από τους ίδιους τους νέους στη σημερινή συγκυρία και με βάση ερωτήματα που προκύπτουν τόσο από τον δημόσιο λόγο όσο και από τους προσανατολισμούς της σύγχρονης έρευνας. Χρησιμοποιεί μια ποικιλία μεθόδων για να φωτίσει κρίσιμα ερωτήματα: Τι εννοούμε όταν προφέρουμε τις λέξεις «νέοι», «νέα γενιά», «νεολαία»; Ποιο είναι το κοινωνικο-δημογραφικό προφίλ της ελληνικής νεολαίας και ποια η σχέση της με τα ΜΜΕ και την τεχνολογία; Ποιες είναι οι αξιακές προτεραιότητες των νέων; Πώς εκδηλώνεται η θρησκευτικότητα και οι συναφείς πρακτικές τους; Ποιες είναι οι προσδοκίες και οι φόβοι τους για το μέλλον; Πώς αρθρώνονται οι διαπροσωπικές τους σχέσεις και το κοινωνικό τους κεφάλαιο; Ποια η στάση τους απέναντι στους θεσμούς, την κοινωνική συμμετοχή και την πολιτική; Πώς σχετίζονται γνωστικά και συναισθηματικά με την εθνική ταυτότητα και την ευρωπαϊκή προοπτική;



Good Governance and Public Administration Reform in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Member States

Stella Ladi

Xenophon Paper No. 6

December 2008

<http://www.icbss.org/>

Public administration reform, aiming at good governance and modernisation of the state, is a target for every nation on the globe. The term "good governance" has been discussed in the literature and has been extensively used by international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). It is a broad term that includes values and practices such as legality, justice, trust in laws and institutions, efficiency, responsible budgeting, management of human resources and crisis management. It is argued that the theoretical framework of "Policy Transfer Network" is useful for the description and the analysis of the changes that are taking place in the BSEC member states following the good governance principles. The BSEC is an interesting case-study because it includes countries with different levels of development, countries that are members of the European Union (EU), namely Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, and candidate countries (Turkey). The BSEC is also an interesting international organisation because, as it is argued, it acts as an agent of "soft" policy transfer of good governance practices. A stronger push towards modernisation can be observed among the BSEC member states that are also members of the EU. This comparison leads to some interesting conclusions on the impact of Europeanisation on cases of successful policy transfer.

The relevance of the EU

*by Dr. Dimitris Tsarouhas**



The European Union is often accused of all kinds of evils. The substantial criticism tends to concentrate on its 'democratic deficit, that is, the distance that separates the Union's institutions from European citizens. The EU, a similar line of argument goes, is irrelevant to most peoples' everyday lives and fails to make a positive difference to things that matter to them, such as unemployment, crime or the environment. In fact, in those occasions where it is seen as active it is for all the wrong reasons (such as its admittedly bizarre interest in regulating the shape of cucumbers sold in the EU market). Euroscepticism has become more popular, as the policy-making capacities of the Union have expanded and as its internal diversity has grown through successive waves of enlargement.

They come in different shapes and exist in all member states, candidate countries and beyond, but the core argument of Eurosceptics is pretty much standard. States are, or ought to be, the masters of peoples' destiny, and supranational institutions of the EU cannot claim credit for Europe's achievements. Last week's events confirmed how wrong they are.

After the adoption of the maximum 48-hour working week through a 1993 Council Directive, exceptions have been made for some member states leading to inequity in the Directive's application. The UK and some other member states had secured an opt-out from the Directive, allowing under circumstances a working week of up to 65 hours. Following a Commission proposal of 2004 proposals, the Council adopted a position last summer that would maintain the opt-out.

EU institutions have ever since 1993 been reformed; the European Parliament in particular has become a co-legislator, along with the Council, on issues such as working time. This is down to successive revisions of the European Union's functions through Treaty revisions (Maastricht in 1991, Amsterdam in 1997 and so on). Last week, the newly empowered European Parliament voted in favour a substantially revised version of the Council's adopted plan. According to most MEPs (421 votes to 273), the special opt-out rights secured by the UK and Central and East European member states on working time limits should be scrapped and hours on duty should be calculated as working hours. The debate on regulating working time in Europe will now continue, and the opt-out will remain a point of political contention.

Protest in Brussels against the Council's position has been vocal and sustained, culminating in a sizeable demonstration days before the Parliament's deliberations. Quite clearly, many Europeans realize that EU decisions on matters such as working time have a clear effect on their everyday living standards. Far from irrelevant, the EU is today part of the solution to common problems.

The Union has shown in the working time saga its ability to reform its institutions towards a positive direction. What originally was a consultative Assembly has become, through successive Treaty revisions and a lot of hard work, a co-legislator on EU affairs. Its decision last week enhances its legitimacy as a democratically elected, legitimate and relevant EU institution responsive to popular concerns.

What will now follow is a conciliation process aiming at bringing Council and Parliament views closer together. It is to be hoped that a successful compromise will be found, although the distance currently separating the Council from the Parliament is substantial. States such as the UK are unlikely to accept the withdrawal of the opt-out.

Still, Europe has shown that it can have a political debate, and that decisions are not always taken behind closed doors. MEPs have justified their vote on explicitly political grounds, and those supportive of the Parliament's vote have underlined the significance of maintaining equitable standards throughout the Community. In the context of a severe economic crisis leading to mass layoffs, the notion that some should work 65 hours a week and others not at all is justifiably unwelcome.

The activism that the European Parliament has shown is an added argument in favour of high participation in the EU elections scheduled for next summer. The working time debate is a clear message to Eurosceptics: the EU and its institutions are not only relevant, but adaptable and useful.

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Upcoming Conferences & Events



The 4th Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus

LSE, 25-26 June 2009

Venue: New Theatre, East Building, LSE
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK

Call for Papers:

http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/4th_%20Symposium/4thSymposium_%20CallForPapers.pdf

Deadline! 1 March 2009

The Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium is a biennial meeting of young scholars working on issues related to Greece and Cyprus that serves as a forum for the discussion and reflection upon the changes that have taken place in contemporary Greece and its neighbourhood.

One of its main objectives is to build upon the success of the previous LSE PhD Symposia. Further objectives of the Symposium are to overcome academic isolation, establish new collaborative links between disciplines, test the ground for innovative ideas, and help 'engage' the wider academic community. Previous keynote speakers have included Prof. Nikos Mouzelis, Prof. Nikiforos Diamandouros, Prof. Stathis Kalyvas, Prof. George Tsebelis, Prof. Fotis Kafatos, Prof. Nikos Zahariadis, Prof. Christina Koulouri, Dr Achilleas Mitsos, and Dr Jane Cowan.

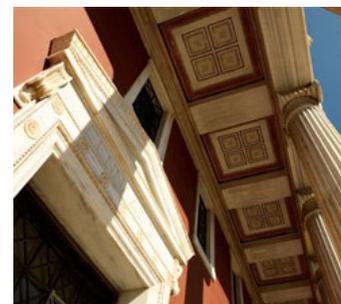
Important Notice: The Greek Politics Specialist Group (GPSG) will be providing modest financial support to a small number of delegates attending the Symposium on the basis of an open competition. More details regarding the size of the grant(s) and the criteria of selection will be announced shortly via our website: <http://www.gpsg.org.uk>

7th International Conference on Politics & International Affairs 22-25 June 2009, Athens, Greece Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER)

8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel.: + 30 210 3634210. Fax: + 30 210 3634209.

Email: atiner@atiner.gr

<http://www.atiner.gr/docs/Politics.htm>



**7th International Conference on Communication
and Mass Media**
18-21 May 2009, Athens, Greece
Athens Institute for Education and Research
(ATINER)



8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel.: + 30 210 3634210. Fax: + 30 210 3634209.
Email: atiner@atiner.gr
<http://www.atiner.gr/docs/Media.htm>

WebSci'09: Society On-Line
Athens, Greece
18 – 20 March 2009
<http://www.websci09.org/>



Web Science focuses on understanding, designing and developing the technologies and applications that make up the World Wide Web. But the WWW does not exist without the participation of people and organizations. Now that a significant proportion of everyday life is spent on-line in many countries, it makes sense for the **first Web Science conference organised by the Web Science Research Initiative (WSRI) and the Foundation of the Hellenic World (FHW) to be dedicated to the presentation of research into society on the Web.**

How do people and organisations behave on-line – what motivates them to shop, date, make friends, learn, participate in political life or manage their health or tax on-line? Which Web-based designs will they trust? To which on-line agents will they delegate? How can the dark side of the Web – such as cybercrime, pornography and terrorist networks – be both understood and held in check without compromising the experience of others? What are the effects of varying characteristics of Web-based technologies – such as security, privacy, network structure, the linking of data – on on-line behaviour, both criminal and non-criminal? And how can the design of the Web of the future ensure that a system on which – as Tim Berners-Lee put it – democracy and commerce depends remains 'stable and pro-human'?

Such a challenge requires understanding of both human behaviour and technological design. So the science – including the social science – of the Web is a field that requires the attention of both computer scientists and social scientists.

The aim of this conference is to bring these two groups together across the disciplinary divide for perhaps the first time, exploring the development of the Web across different areas of everyday life and technological development. We welcome papers from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, including computer science, physics, economics, political science, sociology, geography, management, health.