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EuroPoint: Approaching Global Regions One Blog at a Time

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The Globality Studies Journal (GSJ) started in 2006 with an essay on the “End of European History” featuring the “globality of world regions.” Now GSJ is adding EuroPoint (EP) to its portfolio of scholarly Articles, Views & Reviews. Some seven years ago, I characterized the region as advanced, but less relevant than the United States in terms of “historical gravity” – why are we now adding a blog on this very region?

First point: The European Union (EU) represents the global region that has made the most decisive break with the pattern of antagonistic nationalisms and Clausewitzian acceptance of war as a natural continuation of diplomacy and politics. The 2012 award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU for “the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe” was not inspired by dovish hopes but a solid track record of nearly 70 years of neighborly cooperation and pacific orientation. The EU has changed the traditionally war-torn Europe to become a model for global regions brewing with tensions.

Second point: International tolerance for leadership is very small. If a leading nation does not lead, it will be criticized, and if it leads too much, it will be criticized as well. The global leadership role of the United States after the end of the Second World War and later demise of the Soviet Union has nurtured a certain amount of Anti-Americanism in Germany, France, and around the world. We are now observing a similarly ironic situation in the EU with respect to Germany, the economically strongest nation among the 27 EU member states. No matter what, if Germany leads too little or too much, it will receive strong criticism. Yet Americanization and Germanization are twin hazards; neither an American globe nor a “German Europe” is tolerable. However, German leadership in Europe based on a policy of solidarity with the welfare of all EU member states – this is the European dream to keep reaching for. Accordingly, Jürgen Habermas has just called on Germany to exercise European solidarity (see here). Navigating the new Europe that has emerged from many conflicted pasts, EuroPoint will cheer for the goal of a substantial European political union.
and democratic commonwealth (disclosure: EP is partly supported by a grant from the Federal Foreign Office of Germany).

Third point: GSJ is approaching global regions one blog at a time. The human planet has various transnational areas with deep local histories, diverse outlooks, and global aspirations. In an ideal world, GSJ would have blogs for all major areas, yet full university funding of Middle Eastern, East Asian, African, Latin American, and other area blogs is unlikely. Thus, the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies (SBIGS) will accept external funding as long as the sponsor respects the independence and intellectual freedom of SBIGS and GSJ. All regions matter in a globalizing world and, as I have argued elsewhere in this journal, the local knowledge and linguistic competence of traditional area studies deserve to be preserved, their isolation and fragmentation must be overcome, and newly integrated ways of global/local studies are warranted.

Utopian trajectories: from "Freetown Christiania" to the EU (9 July 2010) and vice versa. © Wolf Schäfer.

EuroPoint starts with four parts: blogs by Bogdan Scurtu, a newsflash, and two reference sections about EU member states (currently 27) and institutions.

EP blogs will focus on current political, economic, and cultural affairs of the European region. Bogdan is fluent in English, French, German, and Romanian (thanks to an upbringing in a multicultural province in Romania, one of the newest EU member states). He has been to many of the countries in the EU, an educational background in the musical arts, and journalistic experience.

The EP newsflash will be updated daily and offer links to articles from top European news sources. Bogdan has been tracking EU news for EuroPoint since early 2013. His selection will open a window into the region's views, approaches, and discussions. As the EP newsflashes accumulate, they will be archived in the EP News Archive, which, in turn, will become a resource over time.

The EU members section features facts about each member state and will eventually include all 27 countries (28 with Croatia scheduled to join in July 2013). Quick information will be offered via economic and social data, a selection of each country's culture and history, plus culinary intelligence for those of you curious about a country's specific delicacies. A list with recent music recordings of local artists gives each country a "hearing."

The section about EU institutions presents the nuts and bolts of the European political machinery by briefly detailing the composition, functions, and locations of its leading institutions.

EuroPoint invites guest blogs (please contact us at europoint@stonybrook.edu). Suggestions are welcome, voting for articles with polling links is possible, and blogs are open to comments. For the latest updates, you can follow us on Twitter or like us on Facebook.