



THESEUS

establishing a European society

NEWSLETTER

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UPDATE IN BRIEF

THESEUS Visiting Professorship

Prof Fabien Terpan is THESEUS Visiting Professor at the University of Cologne for the winter term 2015/16. In his seminar he discusses "The Politics of Law in the European Union". On 28 October 2015 Terpan held his inaugural lecture. In his speech he approached the question "Is the ECJ an Activist Court? Studying the Court's Power from a 'Law and Politics' Perspective" by sharing findings of his current research <http://theseus.uni-koeln.de/index.php?id=227>.

SAVE THE DATE

THESEUS PhD Workshop in Paris

On 21 and 22 January 2016 the THESEUS PhD Workshop takes place at Sciences Po Paris. It deals with the state of the European Union facing different challenges such as unbalances within the Eurozone, migration movements or geopolitical threats. Ten selected PhD students will have the chance to present their studies on one of these topics to renowned professors from Sciences Po Paris and the University of Cologne.

THESEUS Final Conference in Cologne

After nine years of intensive discussions on European integration and disintegration, the THESEUS project comes to an end. On 17 and 18 March 2016 its final conference invites friends of the THESEUS network to take part in a last round of debates reflecting EU developments and developing possible scenarios for the EU's future. The conference shall lay the foundation for upholding established scientific relationships beyond the project's lifetime.

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Discussing the European Monetary Union in Cologne

"Was the European Monetary Union a bad mistake? Should Grexit be the first step for a new system?" – These were the leading questions of a THESEUS Lecture on 26 October 2015 at the Fritz Thyssen Foundation in Cologne.

The speakers were the two highly renowned Greek and German scientists Prof Loukas Tsoukalis, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), and Prof Wolfgang Streeck, former director of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (MPIfG). Their reflection on the state of the European Monetary Union was a critical, interesting and metaphorical

debate in which they agreed in a central point: the situation is severe, but there are no simple solutions at reach. Prof Streeck stated this conviction already in his opening statement: "The Eurozone will not survive the next five years".

It had fundamental errors in its construction, explained the scientist. Planned by the French as a mechanism to contain Germany's power, the Union has turned out as the exact opposite: A German hegemony. This hegemony was reflected not only in the way Germany dominated decisions taken in the course of the economic and financial crises, but also in handling the high



Prof Wolfgang Streeck, MPIfG, speaks at the Fritz Thyssen Foundation in Cologne.

THESEUS is a European network of thinkers and actors. THESEUS aims at fostering an open and constructive dialogue about future challenges of Europe between academia and politics as well as between generations. Its purpose is to establish a European interdisciplinary and cross-generational network.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

numbers of refugees coming to Europe. “Monetary Union as constructed at Maastricht was against the law of gravity”, stressed Tsoukalis. „An unbalanced construction based on a weak political base, member countries with different economic structures and different political economies – it does not work.“ EU actors were blinded during the early honeymoon period that hid growing economic divergence inside, argued Tsoukalis. “It was a bubble



Prof Loukas Tsoukalis, ELIAMEP.

that finally burst.“ He compared the situation of the Eurozone with an unhappy marriage: “We are unhappy with the status quo, but terrified of a divorce, which might have even higher costs than those of staying together.“

Talking about solutions for the situation, even these two experts had no clear answer. “There is no obvious way out“, said Tsoukalis. One important step was to accept the fact that one solution does not necessarily solve the same problems in several countries, argued Streeck. “We need to start understanding other countries’ way of thinking“. He referred to the example of treaty-making: “Whereas Germans think the debate ends with having a treaty, the French see it as start of the discussion“, he said smiling.

The debate was opened and chaired by Prof Wolfgang Wessels, Jean Monnet Chair at the University of Cologne. Dr Frank Suder, Director of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, and Mirja Schröder, THESEUS Project Manager, introduced the event. Read the whole article on <http://theseus.uni-koeln.de/index.php?id=228>.

THESEUS PUBLIC LECTURE WITH PROF SKOURIS

On 19 November 2015, former President of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) Prof Dr Dr h.c. Vassilios Skouris held an inspired speech about the judicial and normative character of the European Union (EU) at the Fritz Thyssen Foundation in Cologne.

“Die Europäische Union als Rechts- und Wertegemeinschaft?“, the European Union as Community of Law and Values, was the title of Skouris’ speech. It has gained particular relevance due to reactions to recent internal EU developments such as the refugee movement. Skouris addressed challenges connected to handling the refugee movement and expressed his disappointment regarding the fact that times of “crises“ tend to reveal a lack of common interpretation of the EU’s laws and values among EU member states. “The right of free movement is such a high good that we should not risk by starting to close borders again.“ Not only with regard to the refugee movement Skouris demonstrated his strong belief in the value of the EU’s laws and values. “Yes, it is worthwhile to support EU values“, stated Skouris. “And it is important to remind oneself of these values from time to time.“ He referred to the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights to quote some of the



Prof Vassilios Skouris, ECJ.



most central parts on the EU’s judicial and normative fundamentals. Among them are principles such as respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, respect for human rights and rule of law. Skouris ended with a seemingly soothing statement combining his belief in the European project with his lecture in Cologne: “For me ‘European’ means that – despite not agreeing in every detail – we can sit together and discuss peacefully, because in the end we share common values.“ <http://theseus.uni-koeln.de/index.php?id=229>.



Prof Vassilios Skouris, ECJ, with Dr Lysander Fremuth, University of Cologne.

ANNOTATION

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THESEUS & THE JEAN MONNET CHAIR COLOGNE



Season's Greetings
Frohe Festtage
Joyeuses Fêtes



RECOMMENDED READING:

THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL BY PROF W. WESSELS

THESEUS Chair Person Prof Wolfgang Wessels, Jean Monnet Chair for European politics in Cologne, has shortly published a new and profound work on the European Council. "The European Council" is a systematic assessment of the – often opaque – institution, looking at its characteristics, leaders and output as well as its impact on EU supranational and intergovernmental dynamics. Taking account of historical and contemporary developments up to and beyond the Lisbon Treaty, it encourages in-depth understanding of this key institution. (Price: £29.99, Palgrave Macmillan).



Orders:

<http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/the-european-council-wolfgang-wessels/?sf1=barcode&st1=9780333587478>.

Table of contents, index and an exemplary chapter: http://www.palgrave.com/resources/sample-chapters/9780333587478_sample.pdf.

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