

## Short Project Description

### *“Exploring experiences – Good governance exchange on the frontiers of Europe”*

*Jean Monnet Lifelong Learning Programme*

Duration: November 1st 2010 - May 31st 2011  
Organizer: CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies  
Project Leader: Péter Balázs, director of CENS

#### SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

This project seeks to extract useful knowledge from past and present European experiences of promoting good governance, and process the wealth of accumulated know-how about the subject. Such a review has been lacking so far despite the realities that - inspired by enlargement and applied in neighbourhood policies - European external action policies prioritize the promotion of good governance more than perhaps those of any other political entity on the globe.

The project will culminate in a four-panel international conference where established experts comment and critique the fieldwork-based, policy-oriented analyses of early-career researchers. This approach aims to contribute to the sharing of knowledge and experiences, and provides an opportunity for interdisciplinary and inter-generational synergies to develop.

This conference and the accompanying research project seeks to tap into the reservoir of existing but not sufficiently linked knowledge on the subject, at the same time aims at fulfilling the priorities of the Jean Monnet program indicated above by:

- 1) Inviting early-career researchers/recent PhDs who are conducting potentially important empirical investigations into one or the other aspect of this complex puzzle, and asking them to produce a working paper that has firm theoretical foundations and also contributes to a general theorization of EU external action as a mechanism of institutional transfer. Such a focus enables the authors to also make clear policy recommendations for partial reform and to evaluate current processes and efforts.
- 2) We aim to link them up with established scholars and experts who have in the past contributed to a better understanding of how good governance can be fostered in various political arenas. Their comments on and critiques of the work by young scholars will have an educational component that aides the creation of synthesis in the field, and also a network component that aims at the creation of transnational activities and institutional links.
- 3) The conference will present previously unpublished research, helping the interested public, professionals and decision-makers as well as fellow researchers to continue thinking about good governance and the EU’s transformative power in its peripheries in a manner that enhances the clarity of our understanding of the environment the EU is acting in as well as the potential for innovation in the policy fields associated with good governance promotion. The linkages and potentials for synergies for a truly all-encompassing overview of the field created by this conference would not be possible through work within a limited national framework.

## METHODOLOGY AND IMPACT

In order to investigate the complex research puzzle presented by the two dimensions of good governance promotion - one that concerns the domestic group preferences that help and constrain the manner in which a given country evolves its networks of governance, and another on how know-how is used and accumulated in the policy governance networks of the European Union - experts specializing in enlargement and in neighbourhood policies must be brought together with academics engaging in theory-driven political science research. Field expertise and theoretical aptitude must be brought to bear on each other if the aim is to contribute to the “processing” of accumulated data on how good governance promotion works (or fails to work).

In practice, this project is organized around four individual research papers to be written by early-career experts working as a team under the guidance of a mid-career expert with extensive and proven theoretical track record. The theoretically sound, yet empirical and policy-oriented working papers, subjected to criticism and review during a conference where acknowledged specialists of the field reflect on the subject and the themes in the papers. This second tier helps to finalize the research and to create attention for it. Subsequently, in a short workshop, the authors will review the papers under the guidance of the senior editor, following which – and after the necessary rewrites – they will be published.

The project aims to act as both a disseminator of information, and a tool to create high-quality research in a way that connects the expertise of established researcher, with the curiosity, drive and fresh research of young experts, creating inter- and multi-disciplinary synergies along the way.

The four working papers written as part of this project – taken together – will represent one of the most sustained investigations of the place and efficiency of good governance promotion within European external action. As such, they should find a broad readership, and should be of interest as much to graduate students and Academics, as to policy-makers and consultants. They bring together fresh field experiences and a structured perspective, which, we believe, does not impede (but rather facilitates) the making of coherent policy recommendations. We intend to make the papers freely downloadable to maximize the dissemination of the research results.

The conference will help attract attention for the project – apart from the Academic added value of providing a forum for a very high standard discussion of research into a politically and scientifically important subfield. The acknowledged group of invited experts will certainly make the event of interest to students (who come to CEU from 40 to 50 countries in any given year), and also the Budapest Academic and policy community. Beyond this, however, the keynote addresses and the closing discussion will also be webcasted, making it available to wide segments of the European Academic and policy community and the interested public in general.

## TENTATIVE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Time and venue: 29 April, 2011, CEU, Budapest

### **Panel I: Taking Stock after Enlargement: Social Learning, Norm Transfer and Promoting Good Governance: The State of the Art in European Studies**

The panel serves as a broad introductory session to help gearing up for the discussion of specific institutional and norm transfer problems in past and current accession countries and neighbourhood policy partner states. As such, its goal is to offer an overview and possibly a theory-driven critical evaluation both of how the EU's toolbox has been performing in this field and also to what extent EU studies and related disciplines have been interpreting this performance.

### **Panel II: ECE Countries and Europeanization in the Process of Accession: Isomorphic Transfers and/or Path Dependencies?**

The second panel deals with the single most important empirical field in the context of the planned conference: ECE enlargement experiences. In doing so, presentations should ideally focus on either a comparatively supported key feature of the process (successes or failures of adapting good governance mechanisms) or offer a close investigation of a specific country in the form of a theory-driven case study, yet concluding with practical policy recommendations to enhance the performance of EU agents.

### **Panel III: The Rocky Road Ahead: Deepening Good Governance Progress in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood**

The third panel is planned to function much like the second, with the crucial difference that presentations here should assume the form of progress reports, offering insight into to what extent a given dimension of good governance has been realized among accession or neighbourhood partners. Alternatively, complex country studies are also an option here. Similarly to the second panel, presentations should be theory-conscious and, if possible, an even greater emphasis should be given to reaching practical conclusions from the application of theory to the empirics of each case/comparative analysis.

### **Panel IV: Is a Revamp of EU Promotion Mechanisms In Order? The Current Policy Toolbox and Future Challenges**

The fourth panel has as its aim the formulation of relevant suggestions for the promotion of good governance in the WB and the post-Soviet zone. It should ideally reflect on key cases from the past, but focus even more on what we can know about specific or broad challenges that await the process. Participants are asked to consider how these challenges can best be tackled and how the EU toolbox is expected to be able or unable to cope with them, as well as considering key areas where an overhaul or policy reform would be most beneficial.

## TIME SCHEDULE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

<i>December 2010 – January 2011</i>	Finalisation of young experts and conference speakers
<i>December 2010 - March 2011</i>	Young experts prepare a Working Paper following the questions of their Panel
<i>March 2011 - April 2011</i>	Working Papers are sent to other conference speakers for review and critique.
<i>29 April 2011</i>	Project Conference
<i>30 April 2011</i>	Post-Conference Workshop where Publication Editor discusses critique and necessary paper reviews with young experts.
<i>May 2011</i>	Review of Working Paper by the authors
<i>May 2011</i>	Final editing and publication of Project papers