ECPR STANDING GROUP ON SOUTHERN EUROPEAN POLITICS

BUSINESS MEETING

FRIDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2013, 7:00 p.m.

ECPR 7TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

SCIENCES PO, BORDEAUX

Room E003

AGENDA

1. Thanks to Section sponsors (Betiko Foundation, Routledge)
2. Review of Recent Activities of the Standing Group
3. Identity of the Standing Group
4. Planning of future Standing Group activities
5. Election of Standing Group Convenor
6. Any Other Business

Chair
Susannah Verney, University of Athens (SG Convenor)

Present:
1. Cristiano Bee, University of Surrey
2. Agustí Bosch, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona & University of Girona
3. Mónica Brito Vieira, University of York
4. Marco Brunazzo, Universita degli Studi di Trento
5. Noelle Bürgi, University Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne
6. Filipe Carreira da Silva, University of Lisbon/University of Cambridge
7. Stavroula Chrona, University of Surrey
8. Nicolo Conti, University of Siena
9. Theofanis Exadaktylos, University of Surrey
10. Elias Dinas, University of Nottingham
11. Bonnie Field, Bentley University
12. Joan Font, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), Madrid
13. Paul Furlong, Cardiff University
14. Antonina Gentile, Università degli Studi di Milano
15. Maria Hadjipavlou, University of Cyprus
16. Alper Kaliber, Istanbul Bilgi University
17. Direnc Kanol, University of Siena
18. Christina Karakioulafi, University of Crete
19. John Karamichas, Queen's University of Belfast
20. Sotirios Karampampas, University of Sheffield
21. Georgios Karyotis, University of Strathclyde
22. Maria Kousis, University of Crete
23. Stella Ladi, Queen Mary, University of London
24. Antigone Lyberaki, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens
25. Jose Magone, Berlin School of Economics and Law
26. Irene Martin, Autonomous University of Madrid
27. Manos Matsaganis, Athens University of Economics and Business
28. Yota Papageorgiou, University of Crete
29. Madalena Meyer Resende, Universidade Nova de Lisboa
30. Paraskevi Spyropoulou, Panteion University, Athens
31. Santiago Pérez-Nievas, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
32. Christophe Roux, University of Montpellier
33. Lamprini Rori, University Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne
34. Minas Samatas, University of Crete
35. Santiago Perez-Nievas, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
36. Adam Szymanski, University of Warsaw
37. Dimitris A. Sotiropoulos, University of Athens
38. Platon Tinios, University of Pireaus
39. Myrto Tsakatika, University of Glasgow
40. Jonas Van Vossole - CES, University of Coimbra

MINUTES

1. Thanks to Section sponsors: The Group expressed its warm thanks to the sponsors of the South European Section at this year’s ECPR General Conference. The Betiko Foundation provided funding which covered the conference registration fees and in some cases, also lunches of seven early career scholars1 who would otherwise have been unable to take part. The Convenor also thanked Maria Kousis for her role in obtaining the funding and managing the practicalities. In addition, Routledge co-sponsored the Standing Group reception as part of its support for the journal ‘South European Society and Politics’.

2. Recent activities of the Standing Group: In the past six years, the Group has organised a Section at each of the three biennial ECPR General Conferences. At Potsdam in 2009 the Group’s Section was entitled “The Quality of Democracy in Southern Europe” with 6 panels, at Reykjavik in 2011 the Section “Crisis Zone? State Quality and Democratic Quality in Southern Europe” had 8 panels, and at this year’s conference in Bordeaux the Section “The Consequences of Crisis for Southern Europe” had 13 panels. The meeting regarded this as a satisfactory record, ensuring visibility for Southern Europe within ECPR.

1 Patricia Calcas, Mujde Erdinc, Teresa Fidelis, Catarina Frois, Direnc Kanol, Sotirios Karampampas, and Anastassia Tsoukala.
The Convenor also reported on the new website http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/sep/news/ which has been established for the Group by ECPR. It is hoped the site will act as a bulletin board for items of interest to Group members. ECPR plans to add a facility to the site which will allow the Group to post its membership base.

Group membership currently stands at 92 members.

3. Identity of the Group: The Standing Group on Southern European Politics was originally founded in 1982 to cover the area then generally recognised as ‘Southern Europe’, i.e. Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain. In the 1990s, this was expanded to include the then EU candidate states of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. At the 2007 General Conference in Pisa, the Group took the decision also to cover Bulgaria and Romania, as these were now EU member-states. However, in subsequent years the SG has not attracted members working on these two latter countries. This may be because they are covered by two other SGs: Central and East European Politics founded in 1999 and the new SG on South Eastern Europe founded in 2010. Following discussion, a unanimous decision was taken to redefine the geographical scope of the Group to cover Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

4. Future Standing Group activities: The Group discussed ECPR’s move to an annual General Conference, beginning in 2014. The conference will now be prepared through a two-stage process, involving an initial call for Sections and a second concurrent call for panels and papers. The details of the new procedure are not yet known but are expected to be announced very shortly as the call for Sections will be issued within the next few days.

Several members expressed dismay at the ECPR’s decision to hold the 2015 General Conference in Montreal, fearing this may result in the exclusion of a significant number of scholars from Southern Europe for financial reasons, owing to the extra cost of travel. The Convenor reported that this issue had been raised at the ECPR Council meeting earlier in the day by herself and other Official Representatives. Council had been informed that after Montreal the ECPR did not have any plans to hold further conferences outside Europe in the near future. It was decided that the Group would submit a proposal for a Section for the 2014 GC in Glasgow and would take a decision next year on whether or not to participate at Montreal.

For Glasgow, the need was expressed for a Section theme which is inclusive both thematically, covering a broad research agenda, and geographically, notably embracing the Turkish case (which was a harder fit with this year’s theme). The meeting chose the theme, ‘Reshaping State and Society in Southern Europe’, which offers a focus on the processes of rapid change at the core of current scholarly concerns with Southern Europe.

Further to the discussion of Montreal, concerns were expressed about the potential impact of the current crisis on South European participation in ECPR and hence on the ability of the Group to maintain its current active role. The first issue was the ability of South European institutions to sustain membership of ECPR given crisis budget constraints. The Convenor reported that two years ago, there had been an initiative by all Greek member institutions led by Maria Kousis of the University of Crete to request that during the crisis, given severe cuts, Greek institutions pay subscriptions at the
Central and East European rate (which is half the West European rate). This resulted in the question being studied by the ECPR Executive Committee, which noted that the crisis does not only affect institutions in Greece. While the EC did not agree to the specific request, it gave a response which offered a partial solution and is applicable to all ECPR member institutions.2

During the Bordeaux conference, the problem was flagged up again by the Convenor at the meeting of Standing Group Convenors, attended by the ECPR Director and Executive Committee members and was also raised in Council, with the result that ECPR undertook to produce a study of membership patterns for the next Council meeting in Glasgow.

The second issue related to South European participation concerns the ability of individuals to continue attending ECPR conferences given the funding situation in Southern Europe. A significant number of participants are now self-funded, which is becoming increasingly difficult given the salary cuts suffered by academics in Southern Europe. The Convenor noted that this year was the first time that so many participants in the South European Section had raised the issue of the ECPR registration fees as an obstacle to participation. It was clear there was a particularly serious problem among early career scholars with temporary posts, while the ECPR Mobility Fund only covers graduate students. She reported that she had raised both these points via e-mail with the ECPR Director before the conference and that the question of support for early career scholars (which of course does not only concern Southern Europe) was also raised in the Standing Group Convenors and Council meetings earlier in the day.

Despite this climate of anxiety about the future, there was considerable enthusiasm for further developing the activities of the Group. Ideas put forward included submitting a proposal for the Joint Sessions, running Standing Group panels at other conferences e.g. of national political science associations, and establishing a book series on Southern Europe.

5. Election of Standing Group Convenor: (This item was chaired by Irene Martin while Susannah Verney left the room during the discussion). A call for candidacies for the position of SG Convenor had been sent out to all members of the Group in August. Susannah Verney had been proposed by Boyka Stefanova and seconded by Maria Kousis with a number of other SG members

2 Excerpt from the ECPR Executive Council reply of 30 September 2011:

"In light of this overall situation, the Executive Committee discussed what might be done to assist the full range of institutions currently struggling to pay their Membership fees. In the end, the Executive Committee decided two things:

1. For the Membership year 2011-12 there will be no inflationary increase in the Membership fees;
2. Until further notice, for those institutions whose membership lapses for a year, the ECPR will offer a special one-off 50% discount on their Membership rate for the coming year, provided the institution had three years of good standing as a Member prior to the year in which its Membership lapsed."
also endorsing the candidacy by e-mail. The meeting unanimously re-elected Susannah Verney as Standing Group Convenor.

6. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7.50 p.m. and was followed by a reception, co-sponsored by the Standing Group and Routledge.