



Danube University KREMS is the university for continuing education. Its courses are specifically oriented toward the needs of working professionals. The University offers exclusive master's programs and short programs in five areas of study. Serving about 9,000 students from 93 countries and with 20,000 graduates, it is one of the leading providers of further education courses in Europe. Danube University KREMS combines 20 years of experience in postgraduate education with innovation and highest quality standards in research and teaching and bears the AQ Austria seal of quality.

Danube University KREMS
The University for Continuing Education



Redefining Regions in Europe

Kick-off Conference of the Regional Parliaments Lab (REGIOPARL)

January 23 and 24, 2019 | Danube University KREMS, Austria

Danube University KREMS
Department for European Policy and the Study of Democracy
www.donau-uni.ac.at/ded

IN KOOPERATION MIT
**FORUM
MORGEN**



Contact

Danube University KREMS
Department for European Policy and the Study of Democracy
Dr.-Karl-Dorrek-Strasse 30
3500 KREMS, Austria

Dr. Elisabeth Donat
Phone +43 (0)2732 893-2765
elisabeth.donat@donau-uni.ac.at

Imprint
Published by: Donau-Universität KREMS
Editor: Department for European Policy and the Study of Democracy
Images: Fotolia, Walter Skokanitsch, Hertha Hurnaus; Print: 12/2018
Errors, changes and omissions excepted.

REGIOPARL

aims at gaining, documenting and publicly distributing a better understanding of the instruments, limits and potentials of the regional level as a bearer of European democracy. REGIOPARL wishes to systematically study, contextualize and explain the role of regional polities in European integration and thereby propose convincing solutions to the institutional and democratic challenges Europe is facing.



Regions and their imagined and real borders

Kick-off Conference Regional Parliaments Lab (REGIOPARL)

Most of the time regions lack attention in the shadow of their big “parents”, the nations, when it comes to EU policy. Nevertheless, debates and discourses on regions seem to heat up regularly, when they strive for independence. What is the threshold from autonomous region to independent nation, and why is the latter an upcoming request in contemporary Europe? The case of the Scottish referendum 2016, the blockade of the Wallonia against CETA 2016, and the Catalanian crisis in 2017 are only three recent examples for the regions' unclarified role in the current EU. Closely linked to the political role of regions is the question of their (inner and outer) borders, not only evoked by the last major political changes in Europe e.g. the fall of the iron curtain or the Yugoslavian war. Who or what defines a region? Which relations do regions maintain with “their” cities and neighbors, but also with their nations or even the European Union? Which future regions are imaginable? And how do regions cope with current challenges like globalization or populism? The third “Krems Annual Conference on European Democracy” is also intended to be the kick-off conference to our research project “Regional Parliaments in Europe” – REGIOPARL. We aim to broaden the field of knowledge on definitions of regions on the one side, and on the other to discuss recent challenges and pressing issues regions in Europe face today.

Regions no longer seem to be a static, reactionary construct but have undergone major changes and experiments in the last decades: EU outer borders have changed tremendously and “inner” borders are still being shifted thinking of Brexit or the Balkan region. Regions form new conglomerates with their neighbors, as can be seen in the EUREGIOs, or are split up into smaller units to reinforce local economy and culture. Several recent approaches to rearrange the classification of regions focus on administrative and economic indicators like the NUTS regions or regional typologies of so-called “functional areas” by ESPON ; opposed to this is the steadily growing emotionality when it comes to regions, homeland and their (imagined) borders, which is obviously exploited by populist movements. The political dimension between those two poles of meaning of functional and emotional definitions of regions and regionalism still leaves a gap to be filled. Strategies and developments of European regions should certainly not be perceived as uniform today: since economic and political power often correlate, we have to carefully observe whether recent changes will lead to an equivalent development and balanced power structure within European regions, or whether we have to deal with new and old cleavages between “Power-Regions” and (their) metropolises on the one side and struggling marginal regions on the other side. Increasing regional poverty gaps between growth and non-growth regions in Europe may harden discussions about European solidarity, let alone a European fiscal constitution.

Due to their contested borders, regions undoubtedly are vivid entities in a globalized world. Though often deemed as “obsolete”, regions could give us some lectures concerning resilience in a turbulent world since they constantly and successfully claim their stance in political and daily life. In this sense we would like to ask for the advantages and disadvantages of small-scale governments and discuss their power to defend democracy and combat populist excesses, in defined and thus overseeable regional agoras. Furthermore we would like to take a glance on the perhaps “dark” side of regionalism, by asking whether Regionalization always relates to an opening and Europeanization or is likely to lead to a closure and withdrawal from the international scene. In a moment of a European vacuum, induced by an economic crisis and continued by negotiations around the so-called refugee crisis, the role of regions (but obviously also of Metropolitan areas) is perhaps in a decisive state like it has never been before.

1 Simmel G, 1997. „The Sociology of space“, in Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings, Eds. D Frisby, M Featherstone (Sage, London), p.141.

2 The concept of Ethnoregionalism has been discussed by Hrbek R, 1996, „Regionen in Europa und die regionale Ebene in der EU: Eine Einführung“, in The Regions – Factors of Integration or Desintegration in Europe?, Eds. Färber, G/Forsyth, M (Nomos, Baden-Baden), p. 13-22. Eser P, 2013, Fragmentierte Nation – globalisierte Region? Der baskische und katalanische Nationalismus im Kontext von Globalisierung und europäischer Integration, (transcript, Bielefeld), p. 45.

3 <https://www.espon.eu/tools-maps/regional-typologies>

4 The idea of “Small is beautiful” has been used by Leopold Kohr (1995) to describe the advantages of small scale units for several reasons but also in terms of governance and participation.

January 23, 2018

- 16:00-16:30 **Opening**
Mag. Friedrich Faulhammer (Rector)
N.N. Niederösterreich. Forschungs- und Bildungsgesellschaft
Prof. Ulrike Guérot (Danube University Krems)
- 16:30-17:30 **Key Note: Small is beautiful? On the advantages and pitfalls of small-scale government**
Prof. Claire Wallace (University of Aberdeen)
- 17:30-18:00 **Break**
- 18:00-19:30 **Round Table: Subsidiarity – remedy for the EU democratic deficit?**
Prof. Ulrike Guérot (Danube University Krems)
Prof. Annegret Eppler (HS Kehl)
Dr. Katrin Praprotnik (Danube University Krems – Austrian Democracy Lab)
Dr. Martin Eichinger (Federal State Government, Lower Austria)
- 19:30 onwards **Get together**

January 24, 2018

- 9:30-11:00 **Panel 1 (Danube University Krems): Autonomous regions – for closure or for opening?**
Moderation: Bastian Kenn, BA (REGIOPARL Team)
Discussant: Julien Deroin, MA (REGIOPARL Team)
Prof. Marc Swynghedouw
Dr. Karl Kössler (Eurac Research)
Prof. Andreas Rahmatian (University of Glasgow)
- 11:00-11:30 **Coffee Break**
- 11:30-13:00 **Panel 2 (University of Tübingen): Regional Parties and Populism**
Moderation: Prof. Gabriele Abels (University of Tübingen)
Discussant: tba
Moritz Neujeffski, MSc (WZB Berlin)
Prof. Dr. Roland Sturm (FAU University Nürnberg-Erlangen)
Daniel Cetra (Center for Constitutional Change)
- 13:00-14:00 **Lunch Break**
- 14:00-15:30 **Panel 3 (Center for European Studies, Jagiellonian University Krakow): Border regions**
Moderation & Discussant: Marcin Zubek, MA (Jagiellonian University, Krakow)
Dr. Joanna Orzechowska-Wacławaska (Jagiellonian University, Krakow)
Dr. Urszula Roman Kamphaus (Edinburgh Napier University)
Camille Dobler, MA (Jagiellonian University, Krakow)
- 15:30-16:00 **Closing**