

Closing Report (zárójelentés)

Project title: ‘The changing world order and its implications for the "wider Europe"’

Project code: OTKA 84079

Duration: 1 February 2011 – 31 January, 2014, extended until 31 October 2014

Lead researcher: Péter Balázs, DSc.

Senior researchers: András Deák, PhD; András Rácz; PhD

Host institution: Center for EU Enlargement Studies, Central European University

Project summary

October 2014 marked the end of the three-and-a-half-year long project “The changing world order and its implications for the wider Europe” conducted at the Central European University’s Center for EU Enlargement Studies (CENS). The research project aimed at assessing the future of European policies in light of recent events, such as the financial crisis, the realignment of US foreign policy, or the general sense of enlargement fatigue within the European Union. Mainstream scholarship on EU foreign policy holds that the Union acts as a “normative magnet” for its neighbors, thereby acting as a regional stabilizer. This role is seemingly in crisis due to these above trends. As a response, the project posed two broad sets of questions:

- 1) How European foreign policy could maintain its effectiveness, if the politico-economic basis of magnetism is weakened by the above events?
- 2) How do trends in global politics affect the EU’s sectoral policies from migration to trade and energy?

The goal of the project was on the one hand to present contemporary English language scholarship from Hungary on the topic to a wider, international audience; and on the other hand, to involve young researchers at the beginning of their careers, thereby extending CENS’ research network, while at the same time linking Hungarian researchers working on similar research topics.

Project rationale

The emergence of the debate on Europe’s future and, particularly, on its regional influence is and will be the dominant academic issue in EU studies for the years to come. Our research provided an audit of EU regional and sectoral policies in its regional environment, exploring the major trends and possible EU responses to them. This project is the first coherent contribution from Hungarian authors to this emerging international issue, a major milestone both in Hungarian IR and EU studies. In addition, we heavily capitalized on OTKA’s project scheme and sought to involve

several young Hungarian scholars in their early careers. As such, the project also offers a look at interesting new talent in European Studies.

Apart from attending to a timely topic, our work aimed to bridge the much-discussed theory-practice divide in the field of European Studies. Currently, much of EU studies either deals with theoretical explanations of general phenomena, or with relatively unstructured foreign policy analysis. As opposed to these two “camps”, the research generated well-structured and legitimately theory-driven case studies which offer a thorough assessment of the policy-making potential of the EU in a manner more empirically supported and theoretically conscious at the same time, simultaneously helping to raise the bar in EU-related foreign policy analysis and in social sciences theory.

Structure of the project

Due to the extent of the topic, we divided the project into two distinct parts. The first dealt with the aforementioned general global and regional trends that affect the EU as a foreign policy actor, ranging from emergent rivals, a shifting US focus, economic troubles and a turbulent Eastern and Southeastern neighborhood. The book “Europe’s Position in the New World Order” is the culmination of this part and it offers a selection of the studies prepared within the project. The volume offers a clear, general overview of major trends and challenges that can hold the interest of students and experts of EU foreign policy alike. It is available to CEU Press. For more information on the book, please consult CENS’s website (www.cens.ceu.hu) or CEU Press’s designated entry.¹

The second part of the project aimed at preparing a second edited volume addressing the sectoral challenges and answers to the problems that “Europe’s Role in the New World Order” discusses. This second volume, entitled “Sectoral Responses to a New World Order: The European Union and its Policies” was recently published through CEU Press, and will be available early next year.

Evaluation of the workplan and budget

Three years have been a tight constraint for such an expansive project, yet our research team managed to address all questions submitted in the application, and prepare the corresponding studies. The generous funding and understanding OTKA provided has proven to be adequate to cover all research costs, and even enabled some of our researchers to participate at international conferences either for research purposes or for disseminating preliminary findings. Apart from the books and the research articles, our project output consisted of three international conferences organized at the CEU, a book launch event, a series of closed

¹ http://www.ceupress.com/books/html/Europe's%20Position_in_the_New_World_Order.htm

workshops for our researchers, and a project summary at our website.² A final output we are proud of, yet did not form part of our application is the network of scholars we recruited for the purposes of the project.

Potential for continuation

‘The changing world order and its implications for the "wider Europe"’ took a Herculean task: it took an overview of global challenges facing the European Union. Our findings tackled a wide, yet not exhaustive array of challenges and policy responses. They have been presented in a coherent format, yet the publications resulting from these three years of research should be seen as a beginning, not an end. Both the EU and the international system have changed considerably in these three years, with new challenges (see the crisis in Ukraine) and new European responses. These changes have not questioned our findings, in fact, the project rather offers a research framework for tackling these new issues. Apart from finalizing the second book, we would also like to continue research under other grant schemes, thereby further promoting findings.

² <http://cens.ceu.hu/projects/the-changing-world-order-and-its-implications-for-the-wider-europe>

Appendix: Summary of Phase III (1 February 2013-31 January 2014)

The third and final phase of the project followed the well-tested structure of previous project phases. While preparing the manuscript of the second publication, CENS organized a methods workshop for all participants currently working on studies, as well as two separate closed workshops where research designs/paper drafts were discussed with the help of external experts. During phase III, the manuscript of the first publication, “Europe’s Position in the New World Order” was finalized, and the book was published through CEU Press. You can read more about its content and availability on our website: www.cens.ceu.hu

In January 2014, the book was presented to an international audience at an open conference where researchers presented a selection of studies conducted in phase three. This conference/book launch was the last public event organized under the OTKA project scheme, but CENS will continue to promote the findings of the project (and esp. the book) at all its future events.

To supplement our core research team, two PhD students were hired. Katalin Varga (CEU) wrote two studies on trade and infrastructural policies respectively, while Béla Soltész (Corvinus) tackled the challenges and opportunities posed by migration. These studies, along with others written by our core researchers form the manuscript of the second (planned) publication.

In order to finance this volume, we have submitted a request to OTKA for a reallocation of funds left in the project budget. The request was later approved and with the project extended until the end of October 2014, we successfully published the second volume under the title: “Sectoral responses to a new world order: The European Union and its policies.”