Europe seen from here and elsewhere

Concluding event of FP7 Project EuroBroadMap – Visions of Europe in the World

Stream A | “Europe” in the minds: quo vadis?
Stream B | The conflation of “Europe” with the “European Union”
Stream C | Borders, networks and fuzzy regionalization of the World

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http://eurobroadmap.sciencesconf.org/

Scientific committee

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What do the Europeans know of how others see them? According to its self-representation, European Union is at the same time a global power (at less in economic terms) but also a profoundly ‘different’ one. The EU’s distinctiveness is supposedly derived from its cultural roots, history and institutional framework. But this ‘distinctiveness’ thesis suffers from many shortcomings and it is therefore crucial to examine how the EU as a global actor is perceived by non-European societies (S. Lucarelli, L. Fioramonti, 2008, Have you heard of the EU ?).

The conference “Europe seen from here and elsewhere” proposes to examine in a critical way the geographical representations of the world in general - and Europe in particular - that are currently available both within and beyond Europe. The first aim is to cross the results obtained by FP7 EuroBroadMap Project (2009-2011) with researches developed by other teams, inside and outside Europe. The second aim is to widely disseminate the project and its findings through the academic community, the political stakeholders, the citizens and the media. The conference will be structured in three thematic streams exploring different dimensions of the image of Europe in the world. Participants should propose papers or posters focusing on one of these streams.

Stream A: “Europe” in the minds: quo vadis?
As compared to other world powers (USA, Japan, China, Brazil, Russia etc), the EU alone faces the major difficulty of combining the different (often divergent) visions produced by its individual Member States, each with a different historical, political or cultural heritage. The Stream A will open two interlinked debates. Firstly, examine the different subjective visions of Europe in the world that currently exist inside Europe and how these imply different strategies (or lack of any common strategy...), in the external relations of the EU. Secondly, examine the place allotted to Europe in the visions of the world produced by non-European countries and show the implications of these external visions for the future development of European societies. The objective of this session will be to compare the discoveries made by researchers of various disciplinary fields and various countries on a subjective vision of Europe in the world. The communication proposed at the conference should ideally combine theoretical debates, methodological aspects (quantitative or qualitative) and empirical discoveries.

Stream B: The conflation of “Europe” with the “European Union”
Conflation occurs when the identities of two or more individuals, concepts, or places, sharing some characteristics of one another, become confused until there seems to be only a single identity. EuroBroadMap project started from the assumption that is not possible to take for granted the word or notion of “Europe” that all actors currently use as a relevant concept in their mental representations of the world. The Stream B will examine how “Europe” should be or could be distinguished from the “European Union” in various fields (economy, politics, representations), taking into account a historical perspective. The objective of this session will be to focus on the contradiction between the subjective and blurry object called “Europe” and the political reality called “European Union”. In political terms as in economic terms, the confusion between “Europe” and “European Union” is a major problem that can be possibly clarified by researchers.

Stream C: Borders, networks and fuzzy regionalization of the world
The concept of border is not limited to geography and it is also widely used in sociology or political science. How can it be applied to the particular problem of the limits of “Europe” and more generally to the question of the division of the world in “regions” or “continents”? As many divisions of the world can be produced according to various criteria or hypothesis, the delimitation of temporary borders is always the result of conflicts between actors that introduce norms in a fuzzy and complex reality. The Stream C will examine how the classical ‘mosaic vision of a world’ divided in states or continents (P.J. Taylor, 2001, Being Economical with the Geography) could be therefore criticized on the basis of alternative approach based on network or fuzzy regionalization. The objective of this session will be to focus on the conceptual approach of the world in order to identify the “epistemological obstacle” that hampers the development of innovative visions. The conference will focus on the question of “European borders” and “limits of continent” as starting point for the exploration of alternative ways of representation of the world based on a non-territorial approach (networks) or a relaxed territorial approach (fuzzy areas, gradients).

Deadlines & instructions: upload your proposals on the website: http://eurobroadmap.sciencesconf.org by 30 June 2011 following the template and instructions provided.