

## Editorial

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### **Cultural branch:**

Leader: Uli Rothfuss

#### **World\_Drives association initiates cultural projects**

#### • “World\_Novel” is an international contest of essays

#### • “Blaze and Cinder” an exhibition project about Blaise Cendrars

#### • “World Society in Zurich” – exhibition and events 2007



I remember the election weekend in Kiev last year at the beginning of October 2007. On the invitation of Mykolay Churilov, David Rotman and myself supported the Ukrainian team in supervising and interpreting the exit poll; currently new elections seem probable. A survey of the Ukrainian team points at the political situation: the Ukraine is living within and between two worlds. The rivalries are still breeding and get even more dramatic.

The events in the South Caucasus, in Georgia, flew like a Hurricane over Europe and the world. The picture above shows most members of our network during our workshop in Georgia in spring 2007. We are strong, because our network embraces the different regions of the “macro-European” family.

We are challenged again by this wider frame, after we have finished a project focused on “micro-European” level, the impacts of multinational companies on local labour markets and the regions analysed by case studies. We have published the main results in different national series. The first part of our book is nearly complete – we still have a

lot to do for part II, the case studies – it will be published as Tome II of the World\_Drives series (LIT publ.).

We will continue our cooperation in contributing to “micro-European” issues together with our partners. So World\_Drives association has got a mandate for consultation for the Polish team; the Swiss government as a non-member of the EU decided to invest a milliard of Swiss Francs as a cohesion-fund into the new EU-members Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary. The main topic of this investment concerns our core-business: the search after the best strategies and projects for the development of rural and remote regions. Additional to the Polish team a Slovakian one is included to the mandate of consultation. The network will be enlarged by a Slovakian partner. Our network can take a very relevant and important role in consulting regional development; I guess we could and should play this role as a model for later cooperation between Eastern and Western countries. The Swiss government plans to give similar investments to Bulgaria and Romania later on.

## Editorial

We are challenged to contribute to the topics of regional strategies and policies in the different countries and situations of Eastern Europe. What can we learn and what can we do comparing the different contexts including more and more also Western regions? We hope to kick off the regional issues in the next period by special mandates.

But I guess as a “macro-European” network we have to react to the recent geopolitical trends. As you know we did it by our last submission to the EU FP7 programme under the term “looking upwards”. I informed you that our proposal was rated by a strongly biased expert group dominated by economists and technocrats.

Since 3<sup>rd</sup> September a new call series has started and we will participate again. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> column (right) you find the issues relevant for us. Please send your priorities, suggestions and facilities until mid of September!

However, the target of our network cooperation is not a question of success in EU research competition. We will cooperate autonomously using our own and further resources. Under the impression of the recent Hurricane impacting the macro-political climate in Europe we could concentrate on the following two issues (they are a part of the call):

- *The World and Europe in 2025*
- *Competition and collaboration in access to oil, gas and mineral resources*

7<sup>th</sup> of September  
Hans-Peter Meier-Dallach

## Questions

**The geopolitical future until 2025 with a focus on a macro-European perspective:**

1 Are we staying before a **revival** or a **new area** of shaping the macro-regional face of Europe between the Atlantic and the Ural or the Eastern parts of Russia?

2 How do you interpret and evaluate the trends and developments **in your country** – what seems like a revival and what rather as a new development?

3 Which **geopolitical map** of macro-Europe is probable and how will the different borders cause rivalries and even war-like events?

4 Which role will play the **oil, gas and material resources** in shaping trends and the geopolitical map of Europe?

5 What are the impacts of these trends and developments in your country **on a national level**: for instance, polarisation, cohesion, national identities, new orientations, resignation?

6 Which **priorities** follow from such „future-oriented“ considerations **for social research** if you focus on your country?

*We are very grateful for your answers to this questions by e-mail until mid of September.*

## Topics Call FP7

**We find the following issues relevant for our network:**

- **Impacts of corporate social responsibility 2.1.3.**

We could submit our last proposal „looking upwards“ modified once again – changing the research design to our Good Elephant version.

- **Quality of work and impact on quality of life and economy 3.2.3.**

It is quite clear that our LOCLAB project can serve as preparatory work for this topic. However a more differentiated science cluster will compete.

- **The world and Europe in 2025 7.1.1. (see also 4.1.2.)**

It is surely ambitious but a very relevant topic in regard to the „macro-European“ role in the global outlook and rivalries. In our network, including the public opinion resources, the outlook of elites against popular attitudes should be underlined.

- **Competition in access to oil, gas and mineral resources 4.1.1.**

This issue is relevant since nearly all countries are concerned as energy users, transporting corridors and suppliers. Simultaneously the country specific energy-strategies are pertained.

- **Tolerance and cultural diversity 3.3.1.**

The interrelations between border communities, overlapping identities are relevant.

- **Collective representations and history in an enlarged EU 5.2.2.**

This is a very relevant problem since in Western parts of EU even until today an elaborated image of Eastern Europe's diversity does not exist.

**LOOKING UPWARDS****EUROPE'S GLOBAL ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE FACING LABOUR AND POVERTY IN REGIONS OF EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASIAN AND CENTRAL ASIA, AFRICA, CHINA AND LATIN AMERICA**

**The project submission to the EU FP7 with our enlarged network was badly evaluated by the expert consortium. We document our answer.**

*The project summary:*

«Looking\_upwards» starts (i) from world regions and its changing relations with Europe; it goes (ii) beyond the economic governance as a topdown strategy; proposes (iii) global governance practices from empirical insights and synthesises them (iv) for a European governance reducing poverty and promoting labour facilities. The empirical basis of looking\_upwards involves case studies in various regions of Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, China, Africa and Latin America. A central objective is to analyse how European economic governance impacts the life situations in the peripheral segments. Thereby the influence of the modern affluent economy upon local economies, traditional as well as survival forms, is addressed. Based on this approach, the project emphasises the role of European corporate economic actors, mainly that of transnational companies, foreign investments, and infrastructural mega-projects within the range of peripheral contexts included into the project. The project consists of 9 work-packages starting from an overview of the “geography of global economic governance”, its actors, networks and dynamics, and with special focus on European actors in comparison to non-European players. The fieldwork comprises a range of different methods and procedures, i.e. quantitative and qualitative approaches, desk-top and content-analysis, processing socio-economic data and statistics. A framework of concepts and hypotheses provides the guidelines for a trans-disciplinary collaboration including economics, sociology, management and political science, and history. The project works with transversal work-packages in order to further guarantee and stimulate the effective integration of the different results as well as to learn from the cultural diversity inherent to the regions and the international network of 16 partners, which builds on a previously laid foundation of successful cross-cultural cooperation.

*Redress*

concerning the summary report of evaluation

- It is a consent that the three terms “global”, “economic” and “governance” are very open and diffuse concepts. There is no scientific argument that one discipline, economics, can take a leading role in defining it; sociology has and had always a central focus if economies are considered as facts of societal and global (!) frames. The hegemony of a discipline is not justified; a transdisciplinary approach proposed by us is the adequate response. So we involve not only scholars from different social sciences, but the project includes a number of excellent scholars and institutions specialised in economics and political economy! And the project profits from a network of global excellences (like for instance Barry Eichengreen) by the involvement of World Society Foundation.
- It is a consent that global governance – economic or other issues – is a top down conception. Missing are the impacts on people and their outlook to what they do “from above”. The world bank, for instance, is aware of this bias. In the project “looking\_upwards” an approach is proposed which includes also attitudes and needs of those who are the clients and end users of Global Economic Governance.
- The reading of the proposal seems not to be professional: Although we build bridges between the different peripheries of global society, we address a special workpackage to “cultural diversities”, we are accused to be “very Eurocentric”. It is difficult not to suggest that this reviewer has read more than the abstract of the proposal. Very strange is the assertion that the proposal overestimates the role of TNCs but underestimates the flows of commerce and finances. Are we sitting in the false film. Did the evaluator conceive TNCs exclusively as fabrics, exchanging material goods and products independent from banks and all commerce and financial agencies?
- All actors with some reputation, and even the common man, know that global problems like climate change and environment are strongly more impacting people and regions where poverty and unemployment are an urgent problem. We did not say that these problems are the only ones linked, but heavily aggravating the situation! Please correct it if you are interested to clarify that the evaluation was not guided by an ideological bias.
- Surprising is the notice that the term “survival economy” is debatable. We guess that all concepts in a real scientific project are debatable, which will objectively prove the topics concerned. And it is very typical for an ideological bias that the term “mainstream economy” seems not to be debatable.
- It is not understandable that the summary report criticises that the centre-periphery framework is “neither defined nor adapted to the issue of the topic”. In the execution plan of the project the identification and description of the peripheries in the different nations, in order to get the best comparable cases, is one of the main topics of the work in cooperation with the experts and scholars of the contexts concerned. This topic is a core-competence of the international network involved into the transnational project design.

**WORLD\_DRIVES**

Eastern European Network

**The four major challenges facing our work****1. Finalising the book Globalisation arrives at Eastern Europe (Lit publ. Tome 2)****2. Contribution to the “macro-European” map 2025****3. Shaping the regional strategies on national and micro-European levels****4. Promotion of the image of Europe by culture****coordination  
Switzerland****Mühlebachstrasse 35****CH 8008 Zürich****TEL:****+41 44 260 69 01****FAX:****+41 44 260 69 29****E-MAIL:**[world\\_drives@culturprospectiv.ch](mailto:world_drives@culturprospectiv.ch)[www.culturprospectiv.ch](http://www.culturprospectiv.ch)**The network: institutions, team leaders, participants****Switzerland:** WORLD\_DRIVES assoc., Mühlebachstrasse 35, CH-8008 Zürich (Co-ordinator); Dr H.-P. Meier (TL); Prof Dr R. Schaffhauser; Dr Th. Walter**Belarus:** Belarusian State University, Center for Sociological and Political Research, Karl Marx 31, 220030 Minsk, Belarus; Prof D. Rotman (TL); Dr L. Filinska (TL); MA N. Veremeeva; MA A. Markovich**Bulgaria:** Centre Regional and Global Development (REGLO), Sociology, Dondukov Blvd 11, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria; Dr E. Borisova Ignatova (TL)**Germany:** Institute of Eastern European Studies, Institute of Sociology, FU-Berlin, Gary Strasse 55, 14195 Berlin, Germany; Prof Nikolay Genov (TL)**Georgia:** Georgian Opinion Research Business International (GORBI), Public Opinion Research, 45 Vaja Pshavela Ave, 380064 Tbilisi, Georgia; M. R. Pachulia (TL)**Poland:** University of Bialystok, Centre for Research and Social Initiative in Bialystok (BOBIS), Department of History and Sociology, Plac Uniwersytecki 1, 15-24 Bialystok, Poland; Dr M. Bienkowska-Ptasznik (TL); Prof A. Sadowski; Prof P. Glinski; Dr K. Sztop-Rutkowska; MA R. Poczykowski;**Russia:** The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, Political Science, Vernadsky Prospect 82/2, 119571 Moscow, Russia; Prof Tatiana E. Vorozheikina (TL) Analytical Centre Levada, Public Opinion Research - Sociology, Nikolskaya ul. 17, 109012 Moscow, Russia; Dr Yury A. Levada (deceased); Dr Alexey G. Levinson (TL)**Ukraine:** Center for Social and Marketing Investigations, Institutska, 28 Office block "B" 01021 Kyiv Ukraine; Dr. Oleksandr G. Stegnyy (TL), Prof Dr. M. Churilov**Previous and ongoing projects***The Eastern European network was created by a series of conferences and projects since the early nineties. Important are the network- and joint research-projects:*

- **REGIONS:** The role of regions in transforming post-communist societies: Belarus, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine as cases for comparison (INTAS-1997-02025)
- **UKRAINE:** Regions in the Ukraine: dynamics, movements and politics (INTAS-94-3938)
- **GEORGIA:** How Georgians view democracy? (SCOPES FGEPj65810)
- **LOCLAB:** Dynamics and social impacts of the labour markets on local communities in Eastern Europe accelerated by the EU-Integration (INTAS-04-79-6799)
- **CHERNOBYL:** The Chernobyl generation. Life situations and perspectives in Gomel, Chernigov, Brjansk (SDC)

**Project initiatives**

- **GOOD\_ELEPHANTS:** Transnational companies challenged by diverging societal contexts: social performance between Western, East-Central and NIS areas for Europe
- **YOUTHLAB:** Youth, labour markets and integration into local societies in Central Asian and Caucasian countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Poland).
- **REBUILDING:** Rebuilding the past for the future. The cultural heritage in people's mind compared between Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Bulgaria and Poland
- **NEW TOWNS** in Eastern Europe: Learning by comparing – a project initiative with ENTP (European New Town Platform)
- **HOW MANY WORLDS?** Joint publication project on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the World Society Foundation 2007 in Zurich (see Newsletter VII “How many worlds?”)

**Papers and publications of the LOCLAB project:**[http://www.culturprospectiv.ch/en/world\\_drives\\_association](http://www.culturprospectiv.ch/en/world_drives_association)