

## EDITOR'S NOTE

In this issue we bring you yet another collection of essays on Europe, including a mini-forum on 'Europe and the Crisis.' Europe is currently undergoing a difficult period full of uncertainty, turmoil and change; a development that is of great importance to all scholars of Europe throughout the world. This is why *Perspectives on Europe* could not ignore the ongoing developments on the continent, and has done everything to respond as soon as possible with a mini-forum constituted by the CES research network, 'European Integration and the Global Political Economy.'

Before turning to this mini-forum, I'd like to point out that the current issue features three other excellent contributions that, each in their own way, addresses new challenges and trends in the field of European Studies. Kristen Ghodsee, in her essay, "The Politics of Anamnesis," highlights some very challenging observations from her ethnographic fieldwork in Eastern Europe. Kristen traces feelings of nostalgia for the communist past among East Europeans, clearly challenging the dominant Western perception of such a past. Based on her experiences, she calls upon European Studies to rethink perceptions and use methods that allow us to get in touch with little-studied and also little-appreciated remembrances of the communist past.

Also delving into East Europe's communist past, Andreas Glaeser applies a hermeneutic institutionalist approach to the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic (DDR). Based on this approach, he explains why the DDR's collapse came as such a surprise for many functionaries in the state apparatus. He shows how many functionaries continued to be dedicated to socialism while public trust in state institutions was crumbling because of, among other reasons, the sealed nature of the party, the rigid interpretation of Marxist-Leninism, and the vast propaganda machineries that continued to inspire them and made it difficult to openly speak out against the party line. His analysis teaches us how institutional conditions may allow states to reproduce themselves for a long time even when faced with serious challenges, but also takes us through the conditions that may lead to such dramatic and historic changes as the dissolution of the DDR.

Finally, Arco Timmermans and Petya Alexandrova highlight a strand of research that has triggered much transatlantic examination and has been very prominent at CES conferences for years: the comparative study of policy agendas. Reflecting on the evolution and current trends in comparing policy agendas, the authors discuss how they have developed and refined methods to systematically compare the distribution of attention on national as well as European policy agendas. This has been applied to the United

States and Canada, as well as to a wide range of European countries, and has not just produced an incredibly large set of data that has been used in various studies, but has also shaped a strong transatlantic research network that is exemplary within European Studies in terms of scholars from various countries working together toward a common aim.

The mini-forum 'Europe and the Crisis: New Frontiers,' edited by Claes Belfrage and Caroline de la Porte, takes us to the new research frontiers that are being created by the economic and financial crisis that is ravaging Europe at the moment. Bringing together a collection of eight contributions by excellent scholars from various European countries, the mini-forum offers a greatly topical reflection on the meaning of this crisis for the field of European Studies. While observing that we are only just beginning to understand the underlying causes and potential consequences of the European crisis, this forum makes a very good bid to create, as the authors describe it, "more powerful frameworks for explanation and understanding turbulent times as the present one." The different contributions in the mini-forum are introduced more specifically in an introductory note written by Claes and Caroline themselves.

In sum, I think this is a very nice issue to begin my editorship of *Perspectives on Europe* with. I want to thank my predecessor, Richard Deeg, for his great work throughout the past couple of years for CES and for *Perspectives* in particular. Together with the CES *Perspectives* team, especially Siovahn Walker, he has developed *Perspectives* into an exciting and widely read journal. He has set a high standard to which I will do my best to live up in the coming years!

Peter Scholten  
Editor