At the start of 2015, Greece again hit the headlines following the accession to power of the radical left party SYRIZA, a first in Eurozone crisis politics. SEESOX followed these developments closely. We spoke in Athens in June along with Timothy Garton Ash on "Crisis in Europe and "how to get out of it." Garton Ash discussed the causes of the crisis and called for a new narrative to bring back faith in the European ideal. Nicolaidis addressed the need for a genuine European democracy based on the principle of mutual recognition and respect for small states. Anastasakis asked whether the Greek crisis should be seen as an exception or as part of a wider European malaise.

On 10 June, Greece’s Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias, delivered the ESC/SEESOX Annual Lecture on Greek foreign policy at a time of crisis, introducing to an international academic audience the main tenets of his foreign policy. The Minister focused on the geopolitical significance of Greece, at the centre of a triangle of instability defined by Eastern Ukraine, the Middle East and Libya and affecting the whole of Europe. Greece’s stability and external support were paramount for the stability of Europe, both despite and because of its economic malaise. The Minister responded to questions on Greece’s ability to address the new European challenges, including current uncertainties in the Balkans, the rising refugee influx, Germany’s “economic colonisation” of Greece, relations with Russia and the voice of small states in European foreign policy. The next day, the Minister engaged with Oxford fellows in a brainstorming meeting on confidence building measures.

While Greece is still the region’s vortex, SEESOX’s mission continues to explore and report on developments in the whole of southeast Europe. If Cyprus can serve as our canary in the mine, we hope that 2016 might be the year when Athens leads the way from the geopolitics of despair to the geopolitics of hope.
SEESOX News bites

◆ Jessie Hronesova, a highly-valued member of the SEESOX team, who worked hard on the conference and report on Bosnia, and co-convened many thought-provoking seminars, is spending Fall Term at Columbia University in New York as a visiting student. Well done, Jessie!

◆ The SEESOX/A.G. Leventis visiting fellow for the academic year 2015-16 is Dr Kostis Karpozilos. After obtaining his Ph.D. from the University of Crete, he taught at the University of Peloponnese and was a fellow at Columbia and Princeton, among others.

◆ SEESOX welcomed two new junior associates last year, both MPhil students at DPIR: Andrew Heinrich, who contributed to our new Greek Diaspora project, as well as outreach and networking; and George Kailas, who contributed to our work on Greece and other projects.

◆ SEESOX/A.G. Leventis visiting fellow for the academic year 2015-16 is Dr Kostis Karpozilos. After obtaining his Ph.D. from the University of Crete, he taught at the University of Peloponnese and was a fellow at Columbia and Princeton, among others.

◆ Stephen Horvath, an A-Level student at Westminster School, assisted SEESOX during the month of July with writing some excellent blogs, as well as contributing to this newsletter.

◆ Two new SEESOX books are soon to be published with Palgrave Pivot-St Antony’s Series: Economic and Policy Foundations for Growth in South East Europe: Rebuilding the Balkan Economy (October 2015) by Adam Bennet, Russell Kincaid, Peter Sanfey and Max Watson, and Balkan Legacies of the Great War: The Past is Never Dead (December 2015) edited by Othon Anastasakis, David Madden and Elizabeth Roberts. SEESOX will launch the books in the New Year. (For more information, please see panel on left for links to websites).

Letter from the Director

Our region never ceases to attract attention and last year was no exception to the rule: the dramatic developments in Greece after the rise of SYRIZA in power, the increasing migratory waves from Syria through the Greek islands and the Western Balkans on the way to Europe, Bosnia’s political stalemate, security challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean, Russia’s active policy in the Balkans, and a fragile regional economic environment were among some of the themes that SEESOX addressed during the last academic year 2014/15. As usual, we have gone beyond the superficial and stereotypical understanding of issues, which is often prominent in the media and the public discourses, to the deeper appreciation of causes and outcomes. Our workshops and conferences on Bosnia-Herzegovina’s impasse, on Russia’s influence in the Balkans, on the state of Southern European social democracy, on the rise of social mobilisation and activism in South East Europe, on Bulgaria’s new government were some examples of SEESOX’s mission to explain, diagnose and, even, build scenarios for the future. This, we did, in some cases, in cooperation with other partners inside, and beyond, Oxford, in order to boost the quality and the impact of our projects. In addition, last year at SEESOX, we introduced a new important dimension to the study of the region, beyond the intra-regional and intra-European perspectives, which sees South East Europe as part of a changing global environment and a multi-polar world, entry point to Europe, where regional actors have some power and ownership in their choices and decision making but who also have to bear the impact of external pressures. In this spirit, our SEESOX seminar series, introduced such themes as regional geopolitics, economic links with other centres of power, energy linkages, migration challenges, the impact of diasporas, the influence of Islam, relations with Russia and China, and how these connect with the dominant paradigm of Europeanisation. Seen from this global perspective, South East Europe gets the broad and comprehensive reading which it deserves. Once again, a brilliant team at SEESOX and our visiting scholars produced a very impressive, in quantity and quality, yearly programme which is presented in this newsletter.

Othon Anastasakis, Director of SEESOX
Greece inevitably continued to dominate political economy discussions at SEESOX during the course of the year. Beyond Greece, SEESOX continued to invite debate on the plight of countries in South East Europe, whether in the EU, in the process of joining it, or still in the accession queue.

In November, 2014, Rainer Muenz (Head of Research at Erste Bank, Vienna) gave a seminar, convened jointly by ESC and SEESOX, “On the doorstep between Brussels and Moscow”, looking at the economic prospects for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe – new Member States and candidates. Muenz’s rather depressing conclusion was that while these countries could, pre-crisis, have expected their growth differential against western Europe to allow their GDP to converge to the EU average within two to three generations; post-crisis, with a much lower growth differential on current trends, convergence to the EU average will take a lifetime. In May 2015, SEESOX and PEFM co-hosted a seminar on “Non-standard monetary policy measures and their effectiveness in Slovenia” with Boštjan Jazbec (Governor of the Bank of Slovenia) as guest speaker. Boštjan pointed out that Slovenia did not only experience crisis via the Eurozone - it also had a home grown banking crisis in 2013, and was for a while branded the ‘next Cyprus’. Slovenia both participated in the ECB’s unconventional monetary policies (UMP) and also introduced UMP measures of its own, while at the same time restructuring its banks. Possibly as a result of these initiatives, Slovenia was feted at the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings as a rare (if late) success story amidst an otherwise dispiriting Eurozone performance.

Apart from seminars, political economy work at SEESOX during 2014/15 was concentrated on putting together a book: Economic and policy foundations for growth in South East Europe: Remaking the Balkan economy (Palgrave-Pivot, forthcoming 2015). Adam Bennett, Russell Kincaid, Peter Sanfey and the late Max Watson collaborated to distil the findings of SEESOX’s numerous seminars and research initiatives, while also drawing on recent work undertaken elsewhere (including in the context of PEFM), in order to take stock of the region’s economic situation in the wake of the recent global financial and Eurozone crises and identify the policy priorities hereon.

Adam Bennett

C. Maxwell Watson: 1946-2014

Max Watson, the creator and inaugural Director of the programme on the Political Economy of Financial Markets (PEFM), and long-term senior associate of SEESOX, succumbed to cancer in December 2014.

He started his professional life at the Bank of England and was then seconded to the IMF (1979-81) as personal assistant to the Managing Director. Max later returned to the IMF from the Bank in 1984, this time as Chief of the International Capital Markets Division. Over the next few years, he helped devise debt-reduction plans for more than a dozen highly indebted Latin American countries. This work was essential for the success of the 1989 Brady Plan and the resolution the Latin American crisis. Max had a similarly distinguished post-Fund career. At the European Commission in Brussels, he served as Economic Adviser to the Director General for Economic and Financial Affairs, Klaus Regling. He was later asked by the Minister of Finance of Ireland to prepare a detailed independent report into the origins of Ireland’s 2009 banking crisis, and in 2010 was appointed to Ireland’s Central Bank Commission. At Oxford, he spearheaded the political economy work of SEESOX at St Antony’s College, where he became a Visiting Fellow, and then in 2012 launched PEFM. In his extra-mural life Max was an avid sailor, owned a vintage Rolls Royce (and took part in a 700 mile Rolls Royce rally through Rajasthan, India), and also keen bird-watcher. Max was an inveterate traveller and learner of languages. He will be greatly missed by many around the world.

On 16 October we shall formally commemorate our dear friend Max. There will be an afternoon of tributes to him and his work, at St Antony’s, with contributions from those who knew him at the IMF, the European Commission, the Bank of Ireland and Oxford.
Visiting Fellows: In Their Own Words

Eirini Karamouzi—SEESOX/A.G. Leventis Visiting Fellow 2014-15

Dr Eirini Karamouzi is a Lecturer in Contemporary History at the University of Sheffield. Eirini has an MSc in European Politics and Governance and a PhD in International History, both from LSE. She has held a Max Weber Fellowship at the European University Institute in Florence and a Pinto Postdoctoral fellowship at LSE IDEAS. Before moving to Oxford in 2014, she was a one-year Lecturer of European Studies and History at Yale University.

“The Leventis Fellowship hosted at SEESOX was one of the best periods in my academic career. The research environment, fostered through the fascinating SEESOX seminar series and the European Studies Centre’s diverse lectures and talks, offers an unparalleled opportunity for a young scholar to interact with colleagues from different disciplines, expose one’s ideas, and receive constructive feedback. Othon and Kalypso, the pillars of the programme, were extremely supportive in all my academic endeavours and created a second home for me at Oxford. Due to the vast resources offered by the University, I was able to conduct research for my second monograph, write up several articles, and expand my research interests in ways that I did not expect.”

Eirini Karamouzi

“...the fascinating SEESOX Seminar Series, and the European Studies Centre’s diverse lectures and talks, offers an unparalleled opportunity for a young scholar to interact with colleagues from different disciplines...”

Eirini Karamouzi’s monograph was published during her SEESOX fellowship and reveals the rationale behind the European Community’s decision to accept Greece in its circle and details the dynamics of the accession negotiations in the evolving environment of detente and the rise of the Left in Southern Europe. In 1975, the then prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis who oversaw Greece’s transition to democracy, applied for EEC membership as a long-lasting measure to ensure the country’s nascent democratic institutions, thus guaranteeing the country’s geopolitical security and domestic prosperity. The members of the EEC notwithstanding their misgivings over the economic and structural difficulties of enlarging the Community, gave the green light to Greece for geopolitical reasons and granted entry in 1981. Admitting Greece as an EEC member infused a new sense of utility to enlargement while adding to Europe’s collective weight on the world stage. Forty years later, it is perhaps hard to recapture how genuine and dangerous instability in Greece seemed, how near a possible war with Turkey and how real the fears of spreading the contagion of instability to neighbouring Spain, Portugal and Italy. Greek enlargement saw the rise of the promise of European integration as a crucial element in the southern European transition to democracy and became a reference point for subsequent enlargements to Eastern Europe; the strategy of linking European integration with democracy and national security would prove successful, among other things, as it capitalized heavily on the emerging identification of Europe with liberal democratic values and prosperity in the eyes of the Greek people.
“Not only have I already benefitted from extremely fruitful intellectual exchanges with academics and practitioners alike, but I’ve also greatly enjoyed the amicable atmosphere at SEESOX and the European Studies Centre.”

Adis Merdzanovic—Junior Research Fellow 2014-16

Dr Adis Merdzanovic is a Junior Research Fellow at St Antony’s College, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation’s Early Post-Doc Mobility Programme. Before coming to Oxford, he was a Swiss Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. His research focuses on constitutional and political order in divided post-conflict societies using the perspective of political theory. At St Antony’s he is working on a project dealing with the state of political liberalism in the Western Balkans (concretely in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia) and the region’s prospects for European Union accession.

“I joined SEESOX in March 2015. Coming from the perspective of political theory – but with a strong empirical orientation, nevertheless – my research focuses on divided post-conflict societies as well as constitutional and political structures suitable for such polities; the research usually deals with South East Europe. My recent publication, Democracy by Decree, focuses on international engagement in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the year and a half that I will spend at SEESOX, my project is dedicated to the challenges of political liberalism in Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia and the respective consequences for EU accession. The research asks under what circumstances political liberalism, as a quintessential part of EU integration, stands a chance in a highly communitarian, i.e. nationalised political climate. Judging by my experiences so far, coming to SEESOX for this kind of project was definitively the right choice. Not only have I already benefitted from extremely fruitful intellectual exchanges with academics and practitioners alike, but I also greatly enjoyed the amicable atmosphere at SEESOX and the European Studies Centre. I am extremely grateful to be part of these institutions that, through their international and widespread orientation, manage to bring together remarkable academics with whom it is a delight to engage in discussions.”

Adis Merdzanovic

Published by Ibidem (Sep. 2015)

Panayotis Tsakonas—Visiting Academic, Trinity 2015

Panayotis Tsakonas is Professor of International Relations and Security Studies at the University of the Aegean, Greece and was an Academic Visitor at the European Studies Centre for the Trinity term 2015. Professor Tsakonas has held research posts at Harvard and Yale Universities, and he served as an Advisor at the Greek Ministries of National Defense and Foreign Affairs. During his stay in Oxford he was researching the adjustment of Greece’s national security strategy to the forces of Globalization and Europeanization.

“SEESOX and the European Studies Centre of St Antony’s College, along with the Department of Politics and International Relations at Oxford University, provided a sophisticated academic environment and an array of experts of a high caliper. During my term in Oxford I benefited enormously from discussions and exchange of views with certain Oxford based prominent International Relations scholars and researchers. Their genial and stimulating company has encouraged a constant refinement of the theoretical and methodological tools of my ongoing research project regarding Greece’s national security strategy as well as being a source of good judgment and sound analysis. I was indeed thrilled becoming part of St Antony’s highly acclaimed academic community.”

Panayotis Tsakonas

Adis will be launching his new book at SEESOX on Thursday 26 November at 5 p.m. All welcome.
SEESOX on Greece

Legacies

With Greece increasingly in the political spotlight, SEESOX’s seminars on Greek history provided a much needed analytical perspective and context for understanding the contemporary crisis. Many of the historical topics discussed at SEESOX have a resonance on Greece today, and continue to generate ambivalent and emotional reactions.

In January 2015, Kostis Kornetis, Associate Professor at NYU, explored the findings of his recent book “Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics, and the 'Long 1960s' in Greece,” and the climax of this period in the student occupation of Athens Polytechnic in November 1973. Dr Kornetis blended individual experiences of this time with the retrospective views of the Greek public. Eirini Karamouzi, Leventis Fellow at St Antony’s College, saw the book’s efforts to look at the cultural and symbolic legacy of these events as part of a recent trend to offer a more nuanced, and specifically Southern European, perspective on the protests of ‘1968.’

A month later, Dr Karamouzi sought to answer the question of whether Greek entry to the EEC was a mistake. This topic is important to answer historically in light of the present desire to find guilty parties in the Greek crisis. The acceptance of Greece in 1981 into the EEC challenges the ‘Eurosclerosis’ view of the 1980s, and was one of several important departures for the EEC at the time. This is because Greece’s initial application raised the question over how the Western industrialised members would accommodate a much weaker economy, and how they would handle the baggage of Greek-Turkish disputes.

Kateřina Králová, Associate Professor at Charles University, Prague, considered the legacy of the brutal Axis occupation of Greece, an especially relevant issue given Greece’s rearticulation of reparation claims in the recent debt crisis. Dr Králová looked at how the Greek Civil War relegated the processes of restitution and reconciliation to a secondary status, and also made it hard for those involved in the leftist resistance to claim compensation. Very few of the 1800 indicted war criminals were successfully convicted, and the process of financial relief was delayed. Although Germany has issued public apologies, it seems unlikely that it will engage in any further negotiations on reparations.

Sarah Snyder, Assistant Professor at American University, examined how the U.S. remained critical of the Junta’s human rights record, but uneasily supported it for strategic reasons. Effie Pedaliu, LSE Fellow, further commented that the Greek coup increased the prominence of human rights discourse in both the U.S. and Europe. Both speakers agreed that international reactions to the coup had substantial implications for Greek democratisation in the 1970s.

These discussions and debates display SEESOX at the forefront of historical research, and also show how SEESOX seminars provide academic analysis on complex contemporary issues. SEESOX goes beyond media soundbites, and equips analysts and policymakers to engage more deeply with the Greek crisis.

Stephen Horvath
Challenges

This past academic year (2014-2015), the political, economic, and social challenges with which Greece finds itself confronted reached a breaking point. From the rise of the SYRIZA-independent Greeks government to the High-level EU Summit of 12 July that ultimately decided whether Greece would remain in the Eurozone, these months only underscore the importance of answers to questions surrounding the causes of the country’s challenges and whether those challenges will ever be overcome. This year, SEESOX demonstrated once again that it remains at the forefront in the pursuit for answers by bringing together leading academics and policymakers, thereby facilitating the conversations through which we can identify what Greece must do to realize a better future for its people.

In November 2014, Professor of European Integration at the University of Athens, and President of ELIAMEP, Loukas Tsoukalis shared his take on the causes of Greece’s challenges. Prof. Tsoukalis argued that they could be attributed to ineptitude amongst Greece’s ruling elite, the incoherence of European institutions, and the madhouse of financial markets. Prof. Tsoukalis concluded noting that a happy ending is not in sight, since Germany appears unwilling to assume disproportionate responsibility in the resolution of crisis and Greece’s creditors seem unable to develop a positive narrative around the implementation of reforms.

Later that same month, Dr Eleni Panagiotarea, a research fellow at ELIAMEP, presented the main conclusions of her book entitled, “Greece and the Euro.” Dr Panagiotarea argued that, despite having undertaken fiscal adjustment programs of almost unprecedented scale, Greece’s challenges will likely persist. In her presentation, she raised doubts about the ability of fiscal reform of any scale to render Greece as competitive as other EU member-states, and put forth the idea that the debt reduction package of 2012 was inadequate to overcome Greece’s fiscal challenges. Along the same lines as Prof. Tsoukalis, Dr Panagiotarea came to the realization that what is needed is a shared responsibility about making the European Monetary Union and its institutions work for all its members.

In June 2015, Vicky Pryce, the Chief Economic Adviser to the Centre for Economic Business Research, spoke on “Saving the economy: What should Greece do next?” Professor Pryce identified the roots of Greece’s ongoing challenges in the design of the Eurozone, which 1) devaluing its currency; and 2) encouraged unsustainable borrowing by lowering interest rates for Greek government borrowing. Vicky Pryce concluded by arguing that European institutions have made it much harder for Greece to get out of this mess by allowing disputes to become bigger sources of tension than they are worth. She did not see European institutions changing in this respect.

Finally, later that month, Professor of International Relations, Security Studies, and Foreign Policy Analysis at the University of Aegean Panayotis Tsakonas shared his views on Greece’s ongoing challenges beyond the debt crisis. Prof. Tsakonas discussed whether Greece - a state with limited material and institutional capacities and in the midst of the worst economic crisis of its history - will adjust to the requirements of globalization and will transform itself into a “modern national security state.”

George Mark Kailas

“... SEESOX demonstrated once again that it remains at the forefront in the pursuit for answers by bringing together leading academics and policymakers…”
Close to twenty years since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth Bosnia or BiH) finds itself in a state of political stalemate and on the brink of economic decline. Recognizing the severity of the current political and economic crisis, which has the potential to turn Bosnia into a security threat once again, SEESOX with support from NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division organized a workshop titled “Bosnia and Herzegovina – New International Thinking”. This new state-of-the-art workshop of leading international policy makers and analysts was put together in cooperation with DPIR and LSEE in Oxford on 30 January 2015. Participants ranged from established academics to recognized international experts and policy makers, who were able to discuss the ongoing political, economic, and social issues in Bosnia freely under Chatham House Rule. The purpose of the workshop was to take stock of the current political, economic, and social situation; identify the main challenges, including potential deadlocks and spoilers; and suggest possible ways forward. The broader aim was to discuss how to enhance the effectiveness of international engagement in BiH and how to increase the credibility of the multitude of external actors in the country. The daylong workshop was divided into four panels: the current situation; political, security sector, and constitutional reform; economic development; and social relations. The main conclusions of the workshop were summarized in the form of a workshop report, which was broadly disseminated. The report concludes with twenty ‘Action Points’, a succinct summary of the debate, which also includes several recommendations.

Cognizant of the severity of the challenges facing BiH, speakers emphasized the need to maintain a positive outlook given the many successes to date (such as military reform and VAT introduction) as they have all too often been overshadowed by failures, especially with regards to the constitutional reform. They also noted that keeping a sense of purpose and creating a new momentum to re-activate Bosnian society is now of prime importance. Lack of consistency in reform demands coming from the European Union, and variable levels of international interests in the political development in the country have over the past decade contributed to the growing apathy among the Bosnian citizenship and increased obstructionism on the side of Bosnian political elites. Participants pointed to the prospects for positive change in BiH residing at the subnational level and among the civil sector, which needs to be encouraged, supported, and empowered.
Over lunch, Jill Morris, the then Director of Europe with the FCO, briefed the Workshop participants on the Anglo-German initiative, subsequently endorsed by the EU. It represented a fresh approach to the reform agenda, with amended sequencing putting socio-economic reforms up front; but without lowering any bars or forgetting about the need for political reform and the primacy of human rights and the rule of law. It reflected a feeling that EU policy had become too static.

In the Action Points, the workshop report identified some of the key areas which should be provided with external support, as well as urgent internal reforms. One of the main findings of the workshop was that “advancing EU membership is the single most important task at this stage”. It further noted that a regional approach is an important part of the process: “The single surest way to encourage Bosnia to move towards the EU and NATO is by integrating the rest of the Western Balkans. ‘Fix the region, fix Bosnia’,.” The multi-tiered and costly Bosnian governance was criticized: decentralization is necessary though not if it undermines an effective central state. Sequencing of reforms under the Compact for Growth, social security, and enhancing the business environment were singled out as economic areas, which need to be tackled. Careful but robust support for civil society, media, and educational reforms were extensively discussed in the workshop and stressed in the report as some of the main channels through which citizens can regain their place in the public sphere.

The workshop received outstanding feedback from the participants and wide publicity in Bosnia as well as abroad. Srecko Latal, an acclaimed political expert and former senior analyst on the Western Balkans at the International Crisis Group, said that the workshop was “one of the best conferences on Bosnia in many years”. The workshop was also widely discussed in the Bosnian press. Bosnian media translated parts of the report in their daily reporting and the full report was subsequently translated into Bosnian by a US-Bosnia led think tank Dialogue-BiH 2.0. The workshop’s Action Points and Lord Ashdown’s speech, which followed the workshop’s presentation at an event organized by the Global Strategy Forum in the House of Lords, were cited on numerous occasions in political reports and radio programs in the country.

“Bosnia and Herzegovina – New International Thinking” has further anchored SEESOX as an academic institution with real-world policy impact.
In Hilary Term 2015, the weekly SEESOX seminars analysed SE Europe’s engagement with the global environment, beginning with a panel discussion, on 21 January, between Othon Anastasakis, Spyros Economides (LSE) and James Ker-Lindsay (LSE) – Beyond Europeanisation: European hegemony versus global influences.

Anastasakis reviewed how European hegemony in the region was being challenged by external influences, distinguishing concentric circles of influence, with Europe at the centre, the former Russian and Ottoman empires next, and the Middle East and China beyond. Economides pointed to the antagonisms created by European paternalistic attitudes in the region, with European hegemony further affected by both domestic problems in the region and actions of revisionist powers like Russia. Ker-Lindsay argued that the EU had lost sight of the Balkans, opening the way for external challenges; while these had no massive effect in themselves, could states in the region exploit them for leverage with the EU?

On 28 January, Konstantinos Filis (IIR, Athens), Diana Bozhilova (Kings and NCH) and Androulla Kaminara (European Commission) looked at Energy Politics: empowerment or dependency? For Filis, the place of Russia in energy supply to the region was a key challenge; while diversification was the long term aim, the development of new pipelines would affect both the politics of the region and the viability of domestic reserves.

Bozhilova pointed to the outlier status of SE Europe, with lower energy security and declining energy prices risking discouraging vital infrastructure investment. Kaminara focused on new potential in the East Mediterranean; despite the many challenges in getting these to market, none were game-blockers.

On 4 February, Robin Cohen (Oxford Diaspora Programme), Sarah Garding (Nuffield College) and Antonis Kamaras (ELIAMEP) focused on Diasporas in times of crisis: agents of change? Cohen pointed to the multiple definitions of diasporas, as well as distinctions with refugees; whatever the difficulties of definition however, an understanding of diasporas would help interpret the dynamics of future migration. Garding focused on diaspora mobilisation and its impact on home states, citing recent experiences in Croatia and Serbia, while Kamaras looked at the negligible impact of the Greek diaspora in preventing the financial crisis, reflecting weak government-diaspora relations in the past.

The influence of Islamic fundamentalism and new security challenges was addressed by Kerem Öktem (Graz) and Faisal Devji (St Antony’s) on 18 February. Öktem looked at the origins of Jihadism and its increasing importance in external perceptions of Islam. Appearing in Bosnia in the 1990s, it later spread to Kosovo. While posing a real security threat that governments should take
China sees South East Europe as a front door, situated on two global routes to Europe – the Silk Road and the Suez Canal...

Cold war competitor? He distinguished three phases in Russian post-Soviet attitudes in the Balkans: first, opening and cooperation with the West in the region; from 1996, a harder line, but with actions in the region subordinated to Russia’s global role; post-Yeltsin, Putin had begun to use energy for foreign policy leverage. Constructive at the beginning, Kosovan independence had prompted Russia to seek to exploit its power in the region, alongside declining attractiveness of the EU as a model. Russia had exploited energy and business to assert its Great Power status, even if it could never play a genuine counter-weight role in the region.

The final seminar, on 11 March, saw Pierre Mirel (formerly European Commission) and Erwan Fouere (former Head of the EU Delegation in Skopje) look at Global approaches to rule of law promotion in the Western Balkans. Mirel highlighted the increased emphasis in the EU enlargement process on Rule of Law, corruption and public administration reform, accompanied by greater focus on practical improvements. However, this effort should precede the opening of accession negotiations, drawing on strong civil society involvement. The EU needed to re-establish the credibility of the accession perspective, and of its commitment to implementation of shared values, by sustaining strong civil society ownership.

Jonathan Scheele

Russia in the Balkans (LSE)

On 13 March 2015, SEESOX and the LSEE co-convened a conference on Russia’s increased engagement with the Balkans. There were 4 panels. The first looked at how the Russian perspective had shifted since the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Despite Yeltsin’s disengagement from Balkan conflicts, Putin has chosen to symbolically ally himself with Serbia, beginning to undercut the Europeanisation of the Balkans from 2008. The second considered the inconsistency of the Russian role in conflict resolution; it disrupted the West without establishing its own influence. The third looked at the implications of Russia’s economic dominance in the energy sector: with the potential for Russian trade to crowd out the EU, and gain diplomatic leverage. The fourth examined the soft power of political narratives and shared religion exploited by Russia.
Focus on regional politics

Critical juncture? Bulgaria after the 2014 snap elections

SEESOX, in cooperation with the Oxford Bulgarian Society, organised a conference in December 2014 on change and continuity in politics, foreign policy and the economy, after the 2014 elections.

The first panel considered Bulgaria’s international position, particularly within the EU. It was argued that Bulgaria needs to develop a national strategy due to the instability it faces in its region, as well as its long-term issues concerning energy dependency. The second panel brought a diversity of perspectives to the problem of the country’s political instability and democratisation. Considering both the crisis facing the newly elected government and the longer-term culture of politics and civil society, the panel looked at complex issues of legal reform and extra-electoral processes. The final panel, benefiting from the experience of policy practitioners, considered economic reform, especially in the pressing areas of EU funding and energy. The panel discussed the novel requirement for post-accession reform in Bulgaria before it accesses EU funds, and the uniquely Bulgarian regulatory challenges to a Europe wide energy union.

Romania’s new German president

On 27 January 2015, in cooperation with the Department of International Development, a panel discussed the implications of the election of Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, an ethnic Transylvanian German liberal. The panel included Laurentiu-Mihai Stefan (Romanian President’s Office), Michael Taylor (Oxford Analytica), John Beyer, Corneliu Bjola (ODID) and Jonathan Scheele. Key issues that emerged: Iohannis’ belief in a Presidential role inspiring respect and motivating people and institutions; the opportunity for Iohannis to push reforms favouring sustainable economic growth; the need to develop a clear, tightly focused, foreign policy strategy, including a subtler approach to Moldova, using EU membership pro-actively to achieve his goals.

Turning international intervention into domestic cooperation in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

While international intervention helps stabilise peace in post-war societies, it risks undermining the post-war political system, and reinforcing, rather than resolving deadlocks in domestic politics. As SEESOX Junior Research Fellow Adis Merdzanovic argued during a talk on 4th June 2015, this negative effect is not inevitable. Using post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina as an example, he explained that a peacebuilding mission with its own political agenda relieves the domestic political actors of their political responsibility and deepens the domestic deadlock. But if the peacebuilding mission acts as a politically neutral arbiter, pushing for compromises between the domestic actors, it can foster local cooperation, and strengthen the capacities of domestic politics.
Socialism in Southern Europe in the 80s—European University Institute, Florence

In December 2014, SEESOX/A.G. Leventis Fellow Eirini Karamouzi and LSE IDEAS co-organised an interdisciplinary international conference to consider the political, economic, and international impact of the democratic Socialist hegemony in the Mediterranean in the 1980s. Five countries were considered: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. There were five panel discussions: the political culture that ushered these parties to power; the success of socialist parties comparatively across these five countries; how these governments handled the particular economic challenges of the 1980s, which were furthered by integration into Europe and the desire to ‘catch-up’ with the rest of Europe; the reverse of this process, discussing the impact of socialist leaders in the development of the European Union, both economically and vis-à-vis the Cold War; and finally a roundtable examining the overall legacy of this period of Socialist Rule.

The Power of the People: The dynamics and limits of social mobilization in South Eastern Europe

Organized by Jessie Hronesova (SEESOX associate, ESRC scholar, and DPhil candidate at St Antony’s College), Ana Ranitovic (DPhil candidate at St John’s College), and Ivor Sokolic (PhD candidate at SSEES UCL), on the 27th February 2015 at Oxford, the symposium brought together over 40 students and researchers from European universities (especially South Eastern Europe) with different disciplinary backgrounds and methodological approaches to the study of social mobilization. From media analyses of the Gezi protests in Turkey to visual representations of previous protest in Serbia in the 1990s, the daylong event examined various practical, theoretical, and normative aspects of active citizenship and protests. The comparative nature of this symposium showed that the Balkans cannot be singled out as a worn-torn European periphery but is part of a much wider phenomenon.

Political contestation, state capture, and European integration in South East Europe

Milada Vachudova, Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, gave a seminar in February examining the impact of European integration on the political development of South East Europe. Dr Vachudova commented that the EU’s early acceptance of several post-Communist nations limited its leverage for reform. The EU was able to hold continuing influence and cultivate political party competition in countries such as Poland, yet nations like Hungary and Bosnia posed problematic examples. Throughout, she emphasised the domestic variety and how rule of law of development was not always solely, or even primarily, influenced by the EU.

Democratisation in South East Europe—without class conflict?

On 6th May 2015, Danijela Dolenec, Assistant Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Zagreb, spoke at SEESOX on why there are no truly social democratic parties in South Eastern Europe (SEE). Using cleavage theory and path dependency, she explained that, first, when democratisation started after 1989, the socialist ideology was discredited making it difficult for social democratic parties to compete. Second, through conditionality the European Union pushed for the liberal economic model and social democratic parties feared proposing an alternative economic model thereby losing their electorate. Lastly, state building happened through war where nationalism dominated and class differences were far less important.
SEESOX seminars and conferences

Michaelmas 2014 (October—December)

The crisis in Greece and Southern Europe: A whodunit
Loukas Tsoukalas (University of Athens; President, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP))
25 years of transition in Central and Eastern Europe and the impact on economy
Rainer Münz (Hamburg Institute of International Economics; Head of Research, Erste Bank Vienna)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH EUROPEAN STUDIES CENTRE
Greece in the Euro: Economic delinquency or system failure?
Eleni Panagiota (Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP); former Advisor for the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance)
“My Child” A feature documentary about parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans individuals in Turkey, intimately recounting their personal experiences.
Can Candan (Director); Metehan Ozkan (Co-producer/Advisor)

Hilary 2015 (January—March)

Beyond Europeanisation: European hegemony versus global influences
Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Spyros Economides (LSE); James Ker-Lindsay (LSE)
Children of Marx, Coca Cola and the Greek Colonels? Rethinking student resistance in the "Long 1960s"
Kostis Kornetis (University of New York); Eirini Karamouzi (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Romania’s new German President: Where do we go from here?
Panellists: John Beyer (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Corneliu Bjola (Department of International Development, Oxford); Laurentiu-Mihai Stefan (Office of Romanian President); Michael Taylor (Oxford Analytica)
IN COOPERATION WITH OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ODID)

After the Greek elections
Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Eirini Karamouzi (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s College, Oxford)
Energy politics: Empowerment or dependency?
Diana Bozhilova (King’s College, London); Constantinos Filis (Panteion University); Androulla Kaminara (European Commission)
Entering through the back door: China’s interests in South East Europe
John Farnell (EU-Asia Centre, Brussels); Rana Mitter (St Cross College, Oxford)
Diasporas in times of crisis: Agents of change?
Robin Cohen (The Oxford Diasporas Programme); Sarah Garding (Nuffield College, Oxford); Antonis Kamaras (ELIAMEP)
The influence of Islamic fundamentalism and new security challenges
Kerem Öktem (Graz University)
Political contestation, state capture, and European integration in South East Europe
Milada Vachudova (University of North Carolina)

Greece and EEC membership: Was it a mistake?
Eirini Karamouzi (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Anne Deighton (Wolfson College, Oxford)
Migration to South East Europe: Transit or final destination?
Franck Duvech (COMPAS); Eugenia Markova (London Metropolitan University); Dragas Tudorache (European Commission)
Jews, Communists, and Germans: Greece’s handling of its post-war legacies
Katerina Kralova (Charles University Prague)
Russia: A partner and ally, or a Cold War competitor?
Dimitar Bechev (LSE); Oleg Levitin (ERBD)
Global approaches to rule of law promotion in the Western Balkans
Erwan Fouere (Centre for European Policy Studies); Pierre Mirel (European Commission)

Trinity 2015 (April—June)

Non-standard monetary policy measures and their effectiveness in Slovenia
Boštjan Jazbec (Governor, Central Bank of Slovenia)
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM
Democratisation in South East Europe - without class conflict?
Danijela Dolenc (University of Zagreb)
When East met West: The aftermath of foreign ownership of the press in CEE
Veselin Vackov (Director / Managing Editor at Lidove noviny, Prague); Jan Zielonka (St Antony’s College, Oxford)
CO-ORGANISED BY SEESOX AND POMP, IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE OXFORD BULGARIAN, CZECH AND SLOVAK SOCIETIES

Cosmo(Polis): Istanbul, Identity, Difference
Nora Fisher-Onar (Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul)

Saving the economy: What should Greece do next?
Vicky Pryce (Centre for Economics and Business Research)
“Causing us real trouble”: The 1967 Coup in Greece
Sarah Snyder (American University); Effie Pedaliu (LSE IDEAS)

Europe in crisis and ‘how to get out of it’ (Athens)
Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, University of Oxford); Timothy Garton Ash (St Antony’s College, University of Oxford); Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s College, University of Oxford)
Turning international intervention into domestic cooperation in post-war societies: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Adis Merdzanovic (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Richard Caplan (Linacre College, Oxford)

SEESOX ANNUAL LECTURE: Greek foreign policy at a time of crisis
Nikos Kotzias (Foreign Minister of Greece)

Greece’s national security strategy. Assessing the past, anticipating the future
Panayotis Tsakonas (University of the Aegean)
Conferences and workshops

**CONFERENCE (Oxford)** Dec. 2014
Critical juncture? Bulgaria after the snap poll: Change and continuity, foreign politics and economics
ORGANISED BY STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN COOPERATION WITH SEESOX

**CONFERENCE (Florence)** Dec. 2014
Southern European Socialism in the 1980s
CO-ORGANISED BY SEESOX AND LSE IDEAS

**CONFERENCE (Oxford)** Feb. 2015
The Power of the People: The dynamics and limits of social mobilization in South Eastern Europe

**WORKSHOP (Oxford)** Jan. 2015
Bosnia and Herzegovina: New International Thinking
IN COOPERATION WITH DPIR AND LSEE | SPONSORED BY NATO

**CONFERENCE (House of Lords, London)** Mar. 2015
Bosnia and Herzegovina: New International Thinking
ORGANISED BY GLOBAL STRATEGY FORUM

**CONFERENCE (LSE)** Mar. 2015
Russia and the Balkans in the shadow of the Ukraine crisis
IN COOPERATION WITH LSEE

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**My Child**
SEESOX hosted a screening of Can Candan’s award winning documentary ‘My Child,’ which features the parents of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people discussing their child’s coming out, as well as the pressing issue of homophobia and transphobia in Turkey.

The documentary looks at how the families reacted on a personal level, as well as politically through the establishment of activist organisation LISTAG (Families of LGBT in Istanbul). Candan explained how filming the parents normalised LGBT people as normal, and beloved, children.

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**Cosmo(polis): Istanbul. Identity, difference**

Nora Fisher Onar, Fellow at the Transatlantic Academy in Washington and Research Associate at CIS in Oxford, spoke about contemporary Istanbul identities at Trinity term. She compared various identity constructs including ‘homo liberalis’ (nostalgic for 19th century), the ‘homo islamicus’ (nostalgic for ottoman-Islamic golden age) and the ‘homo ludens’, a composite and multi-layered concept of identity.

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**When East met West: The aftermath of foreign ownership of the press in Central and Eastern Europe**

During his SEESOX talk on 7th May 2015, Veselin Vackov, Director and Managing Editor at Lidove noviny in Prague, argued that Western investors entered the eastern media markets for purely economic reasons and sold their outlets to local magnates when they became less profitable. Broader hopes like journalistic integrity and neutrality were only a goal if they proved profitable.

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**SEESOX: Our mission**
This year SEESOX has produced a short film, “SEESOX: Our Mission”. It tells the story of SEESOX from its inception in 2002, through the words of its Director, Chair and associates. The film covers the three pillars of SEESOX’s work: the European orientation of the region; its role in the global environment; and individual countries. There are brief sections on key streams of work: political economy, diaspora, and input on policy issues.

The film lasts nine minutes, and was created by members of SEESOX, with the help and expertise of Susan Taylor, a professional photographer. The music is contributed by Joseph Haydn: his Oxford Symphony, performed when Haydn visited the University to receive his honorary Doctorate of Music in 1791.
The purpose of this concluding contribution to a very full Newsletter, reporting on a busy and exciting year, is to draw together the strands, and offer a few comments on the role of SEESOX. Our core value is academic excellence: teaching and supervising young scholars, carrying out valuable research, and engaging with experts from other academic institutions. Our work is historically informed. This year sees the publication of “Balkan Legacies of the Great War: The Past is Never dead”, based on last year’s Centenary Symposium. This is a rich yet succinct account of a rarely told story: the consequences of the Great War for the region which ignited it. The legacies live on.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter there is a report on our Workshop on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is subtitled New International Thinking. This is another important aspect of our work: taking a fresh look at old issues, and looking at them from new angles. This was the thinking behind the seminar series Global South East Europe, reported on pages 10-11, which considered the region from a world rather than just a European perspective. Other examples are our conference on Bulgaria after its 2014 elections, our many seminars on Greece, and all our work on the political economy of the region, including the book “Economic and Policy Foundations for Growth in South East Europe”, edited by Adam Bennett and others in the Palgrave Pivot series. We shall continue to look for subjects which we need to focus on, and where we can make a difference.

These events also illustrate another aspect of our work: its relevance to policy. This linkage between academia and policy-makers is a tradition at St Antony’s. The first page of this newsletter reports on the annual ESC/SEESOX lecture, on “Greek Foreign Policy at a time of Crisis”, delivered by Nikos Kotzias, Foreign Minister of Greece. This was the first time he had spoken about his country and its foreign policy to an expert academic audience since his appointment.

Important elements here are outreach and publicity: how do we ensure that our knowledge, research, events and recommendations are known about, and therefore have the ability and opportunity to contribute. Blogs on all our seminars are posted on the SEESOX website; more substantial events are covered by a full report which is printed, and is also available on the website. An example is the report on the Bosnia and Herzegovina Workshop, which included 20 summarising points; the report was widely disseminated, in the region and beyond.

A major new project is our programme devoted to the study of the Greek Diaspora, in cooperation with other Universities around the world: but firmly centred here in Oxford, reflecting the extraordinary concentration of expertise and knowledge in our home City and University.

David Madden