The SEESOX Annual Lecture for the academic year 2016-2017, was delivered by one of the most prominent public intellectuals from South East Europe, Ivan Krastev, who reflected on the current political and social mood in Europe. He emphasised that what we are witnessing worldwide is a revolt against the progressive post-1989 liberal order and how the original dream risks turning into a nightmare. He talked about the free movement of capital, goods and ideas in Europe but not of people, which is clearly witnessed by a reluctance to open the border to people in need.

Krastev contended that the refugee crisis in Europe is a manifestation of a reduced appeal of democracy, and of a rising tension between the principles of democratic majoritarianism and of liberal constitutionalism. What we are experiencing today is not simply a movement of people from outside Europe to the continent, or from poor states to richer ones, but also a migration of voters away from the moderate centre. The new populist tide tends to generate majoritarian democracies in Europe through the dismantling of checks and balances and of the independence of institutions.
Letter from the Director

We increasingly live in an unpredictable environment and last year, the first year following the Brexit vote and the year that Trump came to power, serves as a reminder that South East Europe does not hold the monopoly of surprises and instability. For the last few years, we have been arguing at SEESOX that South East Europe has been consuming crises from abroad, ranging from the Eurozone to the new geo-politics and geo-economics. As usual, SEESOX organised numerous activities which addressed the impact of such significant changes on our region. Our outreach was impressive. We organised a panel in Athens on the security implications of Russia and the Middle East turmoil; we convened a conference in Tirana on the impact of Brexit on the political economy and the banking sector of the region; we organised our Hilary term seminar series and our Annual Lecture in Oxford around the themes of populism and illiberalism; we presented our reports and findings in the House of Lords with the Global Strategy Forum in London. As usual following our annual tradition of closed workshops on sensitive regional issues, we tried to tackle yet another difficult question of how the West should react to an increasingly alienated Turkey, and, additionally, throughout the year, we kept on discussing the country’s politics, refugee challenges and security threats. We continued to monitor and debate on Greece’s political economy with visiting speakers from the IMF and the Greek political class. But last year was particularly important for another reason too: because it confirmed the dynamic start of our flagship Greek diaspora project, with new researchers joining SEESOX, new themes to be addressed on the issues of diaspora politics, economics and philanthropy, and a new ambitious interactive map that aspires to connect and engage with the Greek diasporic entities around the globe. We owe the success of this enterprise to the support of prominent Greeks who are keen to support our studies on Greece, from a regional, European and global perspectives. Most of them have made us the honour of joining our newly formed Hellenic Advisory Board, under the chairmanship of Nikos Karamouzis, Chairman of Eurobank, which held its first meeting in May 2017 and had the opportunity to meet and have lunch with the Chancellor of our University, Chris Patten. This newsletter once again reflects the richness of the annual programme, the quality of our core group of associates that never ceases to come up with innovative ideas and inspirational projects, together with the invaluable contribution of our visiting fellows and scholars who adapt so naturally with the SEESOX family. All of these people, coordinated by our remarkable administrator, have contributed for the realisation of the present newsletter, with their written contributions, personal impressions, photographic memoirs and reports on the activities.

Othon Anastasakis, Director of SEESOX

SEESOX News bites

♦ SEESOX continued its fruitful cooperation with Global Strategy Forum, organising two events last year: ‘The geopolitics of fear: South East Europe in a triangle of uncertainty – Russia, Middle East, North Africa; and Turkey and the West: Prospects and recommendations for restoring trust. Both sessions were followed by a lunch and keynote lecture in the House of Lords.

♦ Dimitar Bechev, a former SEESOX associate has recently published a highly topical and well-received new book Rival Power: Russia and Southeast Europe.

♦ Ezgi Basaran was awarded the Dullverton Scholarship to study a 2-year Masters course at St Antony’s College Middle East Centre in October 2017. We are delighted that she will continue working with SEESOX, coordinating our Programme on Modern Turkey.

♦ We are pleased to announce that Yapra Gursoy has been appointed Lecturer of Politics and International Relations at Aston University.

♦ SEESOX welcomes Manolis Pratsinakis as a 3-year SEESOX Onassis Foundation Research Fellow, affiliated with the Department of Politics and International Relations, and based at SEESOX. Manolis is deputy coordinator of the SEESOX Greek Diaspora Project.

♦ SEESOX looks forward to working with Hartmut Mayer, the newly appointed Director of the ESC.

♦ Congratulations to Lamprini Rori, the 2016-17 SEESOX Leventis Fellow, on her appointment as Associate Professor in Politics at the University of Exeter.

♦ Charles Enoch (former IMF) joined SEESOX last year as an associate. Charles will take up the Directorship of the PEFM programme in October.
Lamprini Rori holds a PhD in Political Science from Université Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne. Lamprini also holds an MA in Political Sociology and Public Policy from Sciences Po Paris and an MA in Political and Social Communications from Paris I University. She has published extensively on Greek elections and parties and the rise of right-wing extremism. Her current research focuses on radicalisation, right-wing extremism, radicalism, the role of emotions in political behaviour, traditional and social media effects.

“The Leventis fellowship substantially contributed in advancing my research regarding radicalization in crisis-ridden Greece. I designed and conducted an innovative research protocol examining the political networks on the Greek Twitter throughout the turbulent period of 2014-2016. I presented my findings in workshops, conferences and seminars and personally organized a workshop on radicalization on 1st June, 2017. I also had the honour to be a core member of the Greek Diaspora Project, to which I substantially contributed through meetings, contacts and research. I designed a survey proposal on the social networks and political behaviour of UK-based Greeks, founded on an innovative methodology. Throughout the year, the academic activities at St Antony’s, the seminars, workshops and conferences at Nuffield and DPIR have given me with a constant intellectual stimulation. Throughout the year, I published an article in a French peer-reviewed journal on the rise of the radical left in Greece and co-curated the Pavilion of Politics of the art exhibition that took place in Athens on the Greek 1980s. The precious support I got from the SEESOX team, the facilities in College and Oxford University at large and the conditions provided by the scholarship composed a unique experience to my research and academic life.”

Lamprini Rori

Online dynamics of the far-right and the far-left in Greece
Public seminar: 25 April 2017
Based on an original, big data research design for identifying advocates of political spaces online, my research on the Greek Twitter aimed at examining whether the online political networks function as echo chambers in periods of political polarization and crisis. By exploring the topics discussed, the sentiment and interactions inside and among different ideological spaces, this research revealed that in periods of political fluidity the boundaries of political networks are porous and they absorb the emerging cleavages. In the turbulent period between 2014 and 2016, the networks from party-oriented became issue-oriented and the political agenda played a key role as to whether the far right and the far left will merge or not.

Ideological and political radicalisation in contemporary western democracies: Cross-theoretical and empirical perspectives
Workshop, 1 June, 2016
The workshop on radicalization brought together important scholars from different disciplines to argue on theoretical and empirical perspectives in the study of the phenomenon. We discussed how to approach ideological radicalization, the role of ideology and emotions in armed or violent conflict, as well as the psychotic dimensions through the cases of Breivik and Mair. Moving away from the psychological aspects, we then focused on the process of radicalization by examining the role of trigger events, of party attachments in the judgement of political violence, as well as the online aspects of the phenomenon, like polarization, fragmentation and interaction in social media.
Yaprak Gürsoy—Academic Visitor 2016-17

Yaprak Gürsoy was an associate professor in the Department of International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University. Dr Gürsoy was the 2016 recipient of the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP) given to promising Turkish scientists. After completing her PhD in politics at the University of Virginia, Dr Gürsoy worked on regime change and consolidation, democratization, civil-military relations and coup d’états. She has published numerous articles on these subjects, covering Turkish, Greek and other Southern European countries from a comparative perspective in edited volumes and peer reviewed journals.

“I came to SEESOX in September 2016 to work on my project on comparative populism in Turkey, India and Thailand. As someone who has done research on the history and politics of Greece and Turkey, SEESOX has been an ideal place for me to learn more and share my research. During the year, I have had the privilege to listen to many talks on illiberalism and populism in South East Europe. I presented my own research on populism and civil-military relations in seminars and workshops and launched my new book, Between Military Rule and Democracy. SEESOX is a truly exceptional place that combines academic rigour with cordiality. The team focuses not only on scholarly outputs, but also produces policy relevant research on foreign affairs and macro-economics. I believe that this has been a year that I made new and lasting friendships, broadened my horizons and advanced my own research. I hope that I will continue to participate in SEESOX’s many activities while I continue my research as a Lecturer at Aston University.”

Mehmet Karli—Academic Visitor 2016-2017

Mehmet Karli was Assistant Professor of International Law at Galatasaray University Law Faculty and is currently a Visiting Academic at SEESOX. He was also serving as the Director of the European Studies Centre at Galatasaray University. He teaches international law, international economic law (international trade and investment) and international human rights law. Karli holds D.Phil, M.Phil and M.Jur degrees from the University of Oxford, Faculty of Law, and an LL.B. degree from the Faculty of Law of Galatasaray University.

“My stay in Oxford as a visiting scholar at SEESOX has been like coming back home for me. This is the place where I had spent the best years of my student life. I had worked as a research assistant at the SEESOX and it had already contributed a great deal to the progress of my academic career. Now that Turkey has been going through tumultuous times SEESOX has again provided me with a great environment to pursue my academic goals.

During my stay in Oxford, the rising authoritarianism that strangles whatever academic freedoms we had has taken its toll on me. I had to resign from my position in Turkey. SEESOX has provided me with the academic refuge where I could pursue my research in freedom. My research focused on the role of the judiciary in the crackdown on freedom of expression in Turkey. In July 2016, I gave a talk on the botched coup attempt in Turkey. I presented the findings of my research in a different talk as part of the seminar series on rule of law in South East Europe. The one-day workshop on how should the West engage with Turkey provided me with important insights of colleagues from various disciplines. As a response to the rising global tide of populism and authoritarianism SEESOX hosted various seminars examining the challenge this rise poses to democracy and to the rule of law. These seminars approached the issue with an interdisciplinary perspective. This focus has been immensely useful for me. It gave me chance to posit the findings of my research in a comparative perspective and to discuss them with experts who faced similar challenges.”
Charles Enoch and Kalypso Nicolaidis offer their take on Greece’s current debt renegotiations in a new SEESOX paper.

After his electoral victory in the Fall of 2015, Tsipras’ mandate was clear: to implement the 3rd Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), an understanding with Greece’s EU partners on the policy conditions for being bailed out yet again. The agreement was not only negotiated and signed by the Syriza government but endorsed in parliament by all major political parties – except Golden Dawn.

In June 2017 the IMF Board approved in principle a new programme that will only disburse once Greece achieves a sustainable debt burden, i.e. there is a reduction in the country’s debt obligations. The IMF’s contribution is essentially nominal, but has disproportionate symbolic significance.

In an unholy alliance with the IMF, Tsipras has won a commitment from the European partners that debt restructuring would be tackled in connection with this bailout. Greek debt unsustainability will finally be faced and addressed by debt relief. All forms of debt relief are negotiable except “nominal haircuts.” Nevertheless, there remain significant differences between IMF and what the Europeans have in mind. Debt reductions, if any, have had to be non-transparent, in order to not frighten the German public and to maintain the image of probity.

There is however an opening to a more imaginative response. President Macron has indicated a more flexible approach, and once Angela Merkel is re-elected she will have the chance to go beyond the minimum in order to reduce Greek debt servicing and start putting the Greek crisis behind.

There are a number of other important issues to consider regarding this program. They are addressed in our longer forthcoming discussion paper. These include the continued, albeit attenuated, high primary deficit targets, the structural reforms, as well as, still, “fairness” and ownership considerations.

Quite apart from the programme and the debt, Greece may not have an easy economic time ahead: the working age labour force is projected to decline by 30% between 2020 and 2060, and long-term growth is therefore put at only 1% per annum. There is little room for error here if one wishes to avoid a return to recession, so it is critical that the present juncture is used to strengthen the basics—not just the cosmetics—of the economy.

Greece’s 2015 economic adjustment program came at the country’s most critical juncture. The sense of urgency and a national existential risk helped at the time to cement broad cross-party parliamentary approval. Prospective debt reduction should make the programme viable. For a country seeking to exit its own modern day Great Depression within the euro, there seems no alternative.

Charles Enoch and Kalypso Nicolaidis

The full version of the paper can be found at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/seesox

A democratic challenge: Social reform in Greece under Syriza

Seminar, 15 November 2016

George Katrougalos (former Minister of Labour and Social Security, now Alternate Foreign Minister in the Greek Government) spoke at SEESOX with a panel of discussants: Bernhardt Ebbinghaus (Mannheim University), Marek Naczyk (Kellogg College) and Pavlos Eleftheriadis (Mansfield College).

Katrougalos explained the context of Greek pension reforms and his perception that SYRIZA had taken what he described as a “neo-liberal” commitment, contained in the MoU signed with the EU and the IMF, and incorporated it into a “progressive” pension reform. His presentation of the context of the reforms took in aspects of Greek politics – characterised by a clientilistic culture and general popular distrust of the traditional political parties – and what he described as the EU’s apparent lack of democracy – Syriza perceived the EU as determined to make an example of Greece to prove that only one economic policy was possible and that any deviation from this would lead to failure.

1) Fiscal adjustment
   “How much budget surplus?”

2) Compensatory measures
   “How much money should flow back in?”

3) Structural reforms
   “How should the Greek economy work?”
Europe, its neighbourhood and the geopolitics of fear

Athens, 27 September 2016

A team from SEESOX, composed of Othon Anastasakis, David Madden, Antonis Kamaras and Julie Adams, together with Professor Eugene Rogan, Director of the Middle East Centre, St Antony’s College, Oxford, and Professor Paul Chaisty of the Russian and Eurasian Centre, also at St Antony’s College, visited Athens 25-28 September. The central event of this visit was a presentation at the Megaron Plus on the above theme by Professors Rogan and Chaisty and Dr Constantine Filis, Panteion University, Athens, as discussant. There were also a working lunch hosted by the British Ambassador at his Residence, and a round table discussion with Professors of International Relations from the Panteion University.

The main theme at the Megaron was the position of the region within the triangle of uncertainty: Russia, the Middle East and North Africa. The question to the speakers was whether we were witnessing a return to geopolitics and more particularly the geopolitics of fear.

Professor Rogan described how the Middle East had destabilised Europe since the Arab Spring in 2011. The gaps opened by the Arab Spring had been filled not by civil societies but by militias with guns. There were three main paradigms of power: the Iranian Shia model; the Saudi Wahhabi vision; and the Moslem Brotherhood e.g. in Egypt. All had clashed among wider Sunni/Shia antagonisms, and in turn all were challenged by ISIS. The region had never been more violent or fearful. There were cold wars (Iran/Saudi, Israel/Palestine), hot wars (Syria, Libya, Yemen) and legacy wars (Afghanistan, Iraq). The destruction in Syria was catastrophic, with levels of destruction not seen since the Second World War. Russia would have to play a role in a settlement, despite its brutal tactics. So should the US and EU, with money for reconstruction, safe enclaves and no-fly zones. Once there was a real peace process in Syria, there should be a focus on Libya, Yemen and Israel/Palestine. Any redrawing of boundaries in the Middle East would have terrible consequences.

Professor Chaisty said that both Syria and the war in the Ukraine had had profound consequences for the EU. They brought to an end the post-Cold War settlement. Russia believed in a system of great powers, with zones of influence; and opposed a unipolar world. It particularly resented the eastward expansion of NATO. It saw values-based policies as a threat to Russian state sovereignty and national interests. Russian policy was essentially opportunistic, non-ideological and reactive to specific contingencies e.g. Maidan. But Russia still saw relations with Europe as important, especially in terms of trade, energy and culture; and these relations would continue to reflect elements of conflict, competition and collaboration. Military conflict between Russia and the West was unlikely, because of NATO and Moscow’s wish to avoid an existential crisis; but Russian policy would remain assertive, and there was always the risk of miscalculation. Action in the Ukraine had brought about a strengthening of NATO in the Baltics and Poland, and also encouraged EU countries to think more about European defence, and energy supplies.

David Madden
The SEESOX Greek Diaspora Project

On 24 September 2016 SEESOX co-organised with Reload Greece and the London Business School a conference, entitled ‘Enterprising Diasporas: From Brain Drain to Brain Gain’. Among the issues discussed were the nature of crisis-driven Greek entrepreneurship and synergies with the diaspora; the wider involvement of the diaspora in Greece’s future up to and including participation in policy debates and public life; examples of nonprofit activity involving the diaspora in Greece. Highlights of the Reload Conference can be found at https://goo.gl/nH2H2M

On 3 March 2017 SEESOX held a workshop entitled “Diaspora and Development: The Case of Greece” at St Antony’s College. The workshop opened the Greek Diaspora Project’s research prospectus to the critical scrutiny of distinguished scholars and familiarized the GDP’s core team to the latest developments in the methodological and comparative approaches of diaspora scholarship. Importantly, considering the insularity that has often characterized Greek Diaspora Studies, most of the workshop participants were not experts on the Greek diaspora but rather experts on other diasporas and facets of the worldwide diaspora experience. The workshop report can be found at https://goo.gl/cQWR9p

On the 14 June of 2017 the Interactive Diaspora Map was presented at an event organized by the Foreign Ministry of Greece, the General Secretariat of Greek Abroad and SEESOX at the Thessaloniki City Hall. The Interactive Diaspora Map is the digital recording of the Greek diaspora’s associational and in general collective life, an effort which started in 2015 by the Ministry and which will continuously be enhanced by SEESOX research staff in quantitative and quality terms. The Map will be increasingly interactive in order to facilitate both research on the Greek diaspora and interaction between the diaspora and the homeland. The Greek Diaspora Map can be found at https://goo.gl/nGrWUW.

Antonis Kamaras

Exploring intra-EU mobilities at times of crisis

Workshop, 20 June 2017

On Tuesday 20 June 2017, as part of its activities for the GDP project, SEESOX hosted the workshop ‘Exploring intra-EU mobilities at times of Crisis’. The workshop, an outcome of the EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie project EUMIGRE, helped contextualise the recent surge of emigration from Greece within the broader map of European migrations at times of crisis.

At the dawn of the 21st century, intra-EU mobility emerges as an increasingly complex and ambivalent phenomenon. On the one hand, EU-wide opinion polls depict freedom of movement as “the most positive result of” European integration. On the other, with migration having become a hot issue, the freedom of movement within EU is increasingly becoming questioned. This process, which is part and parcel of a shift from the on-going politicisation of migration in specific European national contexts to debating migration across the EU as a whole, started the with EU enlargements eastwards and the Eurozone crisis and escalated with the refugee “crisis” and the recent vote of Britons to exit the Union.

The workshop brought together prominent scholars of intra-EU migration aiming to shift attention from the master narratives about intra-EU mobility to the lived experience of key actors, the mobile citizens. The paper presentations keynotes and roundtable discussions brought to the fore the lessons that can be drawn by those who may be ‘pioneers of European integration’, in that they promote it in practice from below, yet they are at the same time a product of its present-day shortcomings.

Manolis Pratsinakis
As global developments challenge the predominance of the liberal democratic model, the ongoing European crises appear to have facilitated the (re-) emergence of illiberalism as a viable alternative for political elites, both within the European Union and on its periphery. Arguably, this effect has been greater in transition countries that found their path towards liberal democracy disrupted, as well as in countries that already face internal challenges in terms of their legal, political, social, or economic environments. For this reason, this year’s SEESOX Core Seminar Series explored the rise and sustainability of illiberalism in South East Europe (SEE) as well as the domestic and international reactions it engenders.

We defined illiberalism, on the one hand, as the ideological negation of core principles of liberal democracy such as checks and balances, the rule of law, governmental accountability or transparency, and, on the other hand, as direct or indirect attempts to subvert these values through political (in)action. More concretely, we engaged with various expressions of political, economic, and social illiberalism in a region of a late and protracted transition to democracy and market economy. In their respective seminars, our speakers debated phenomena of state capture, the rise of authoritarianism, a decline of democratic standards, challenges to the rule of law, the role of populism as an ideology and strategy, and, finally, the connection between illiberalism and an essentially post-ideological party politics that we see in many SEE countries.

As detailed accounts of each seminar may be found on the SEESOX blog page, we shall limit ourselves here to outlining some summary thoughts presented by our speakers.

The series started with a talk by Kerem Öktem and Karabekir Akkoyunlu from the University of Graz. The speakers presented the major findings of their special issue entitled “Exit from democracy: Illiberal governance in Turkey”. Putting these developments into a larger geopolitical context, both speakers emphasised the rise in authoritarianism and populism in contemporary Turkey and outlined an emerging zero sum quality to Turkish politics, which renders a peaceful change of governments increasingly difficult.

The second seminar hosted Florian Bieber, also from the University of Graz, who spoke about the general developments in the Western Balkans. In the past decade, we may observe a steady decline of democracy in this region as well as a rise in illiberalism and even authoritarianism based on strong man leadership. This poses an interesting conundrum, for during the same period of time, the region has been steadily moving towards EU membership. According to Bieber, this was possible because of the technocratic and elite-based nature of the accession process, which fails to capture the essence of democracy.
In the third seminar, we tackled the state of the rule of law in South East Europe. Kalypso Nicolaïdis (SEESOX) presented a conceptual model for better EU rule of law promotion that went beyond merely enshrining respective principles in the laws, but living them by actually engaging the population at large while simultaneously accepting that, in many rule of law areas, there are often no universal EU standards to be followed, but a variety of possibilities and options within member states. Mehmet Karli (SEESOX), and Damir Banović from the University of Sarajevo, debated the question what this kind of rule of law promotion would mean for Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina, respectively.

The fourth seminar focused on the question of IMF conditionality and whether or not, due to its technocratic nature, it leads to political illiberalism by removing alternatives from political decision-making. Our speakers Merih Angin from the Blavatnik School of Government, Saliha Metinsoy from Wadham Collage, Oxford, and Alexander Kentikelenis from Trinity College, Oxford, debated different aspects of this overall question. Angin focused on privatisations of large-scale enterprises in Turkey, Metinsoy on the causes of political unrest under IMF programmes in Greece, Ireland, Latvia, and Portugal, while Kentikelenis discussed the link between structural adjustment and the social dynamics of liberal backsliding by looking at how policy reforms introduced after the onset of the economic crisis in Greece have affected the population.

In the fifth seminar of the series, Yaprak Gürsoy (SEESOX) discussed varieties of populism from Europe to Asia. Starting from the argument that the current literature on populism in Europe, the USA, and Latin America is insufficient to explain varieties of populism in less frequently analysed regions, Gürsoy presented the findings of her comparative study of three populist parties: the Thais Love Thais Party and its successors in Thailand, the People’s Party in India, and the Justice and Development Party in Turkey. As she argued, all these parties are nationalist, similar to the extreme right parties in Europe, but they do not make immigration their core issue. They have strong emphasis on neo-liberal economic policies, but unlike ideologically similar Latin American parties, they do not have thin party organisations. Instead, to counterbalance state power and the establishment elite, they socially mobilise their party members and supporters, similar to the classical populists of the 1950s and 1960s in Latin America.

The sixth and final seminar of the series discussed illiberalism and post-ideology party politics in South East Europe. SEESOX Academic Visitor Adis Merdzanovic (SEESOX) explained how the process of the Western Balkans’ European Union integration removed from contestation many policy choices by presenting them in an apolitical, technocratic manner thereby structuring the political space in a post-ideological way, paving the way for authoritarianism and state capture. Against this background, Othon Anastasakis (SEESOX) focused on the developments within centre-left political parties in the Balkans. He discussed the ambivalent and ill-defined ideological nature of their structures and policies by focusing on their transition and reform from communism; the particularistic, personalised and clientelist nature of the party system; and the wider “Balkanisation” of social democratic parties in the current crisis-ridden European environment.

For detailed accounts of each seminar, please visit the SEESOX blog: https://seesoxblog.blogspot.co.uk
Alongside the SEESOX Core Seminar Series, several seminars were given across the year on aspects of regional politics.

In October 2016, Professor Kenneth Morrison, of De Montfort University, presented his book *Sarajevo’s Holiday Inn: On the frontline of politics and war*. His book is the first comprehensive history of a building that was so central to the politics of the period leading up to the Bosnian War, as well as symbol of Sarajevo during the War. Placing the hotel in the global context of “war-hotels” used by journalists, Morrison also presented some hypotheses as to why, despite being an obvious target on the frontline itself, it had survived. Reconstructed, it faces an uncertain post-war future, but hope remains for its revitalisation.

Three seminars were given in November 2016: by Christopher Bennett, of the Foundation for the Preservation of Historical Heritage, Sarajevo, on his book *Bosnia’s Paralysed Peace*; by Peter Sanfey, of the European bank for reconstruction and Development, on Brexit and its impact on the Western Balkans; and by Sir Ivor Roberts, of Trinity College, Oxford, on his book *Conversations with Milosevic*. Bennett is a former Deputy High Representative in Sarajevo, and the central question his book attempts to answer is why, despite the enormous support from the international community, Bosnia had not become a self-sustaining economy. He is convinced a solution can be found to enable the three ethnic groups to live together peacefully within a functioning political framework. But this required a paradigm shift, based on a restoration of the Bonn powers within a Right to Protect framework, the introduction of shared sovereignty concepts, possibly including confederalational arrangements with Serbia and Croatia, and political reforms to incentivise cross-ethnic cooperation, effectively creating a “centripetal” electoral system.

Sanfey based his presentation on new research carried out by the EBRD. He underlined the convergence challenge all these countries faced, with their economies lagging well behind the rest of Eastern Europe and far away from those in Western Europe. Although there had been some positive developments, the indirect effects of Brexit could undermine them. The first is its potential negative impact on the Eurozone economy, which takes 20-30% of Western Balkans’ exports and accounts for remittances from the Eurozone averaging 10% of GDP. Furthermore, if Brexit led to a further loss of momentum in the enlargement process, this would slow down reform, with negative impact on GDP growth. Finally, Brexit could threaten levels of pre-accession funding. Overall, a “hard” Brexit could lead to a cumulative loss of 5-8% in GDP by 2021 for countries in the region.

Roberts served as British Ambassador in Belgrade before and during the Bosnia and Kosovo Wars. During that time, he had frequent contacts with Milosevic, as well as with other major actors in the ongoing drama – “many unpleasant people”. His book had been written some time before, but permission to publish had only recently been given. It provides a fascinating – and detailed – picture of events over that period and, in particular, of the personality of Milosevic.

Jonathan Scheele
As usual, SEESOX’s political economy programme began the year with a high-level conference in Tirana, jointly organized with the National Bank of Albania, on October 27, 2016, under the overarching theme of “Aligning Monetary Policy with Financial Stability”. Despite its title, the conference could not avoid addressing questions for the region that arose in the wake of the unexpected Brexit referendum result of four months earlier. Keynote speakers included the Prime Minister, Edi Rama, and the Governor of the Bank of Albania, Gent Sejko. Other speakers included (inter alia) SEESOX’s Oxford cohort led by Othon Anastasakis, Adam Bennett and Charles Enoch, experts from the IMF and the Bundesbank, as well as a number of Governors and Deputy Governors representing the central banks of the region. While most speakers felt that Brexit would not, of itself, unduly stress the economies of Southeast Europe (SEE), there were concerns that there could be adverse knock-on effects in Europe as a whole with second order ramifications for the region. Governor Sejko took the reins in summing up the conference in the now customary “Watson ten points”: (i) the effects of the global financial crisis and the high levels of debt incurred remained important for the region of SEE, (ii) continuing reforms to strengthen the Eurozone were therefore imperative, (iii) Europe needed to make further progress with fiscal consolidation and structural reform, (iv) Brexit had increased global uncertainty, (v) SEE would need to navigate this more uncertain world, but (vi) the direct effects of Brexit on SEE were not likely to be large, (vii) monetary and fiscal policies were separate but should be connected through appropriate coordination, (viii) a better framework for managing financial system risk was needed, (ix) economic recovery and growth could not come without sustainable policies, and (x) the future of the EU was the main source of concern for European countries.

SEESOX’s seminar programme included a number of political economy topics. Inevitably, Greece continued to dominate the debate. In the Michaelmas term, Jens Bastian (formerly of the ESC) posed the question The Challenges for Greece: What does the future hold, while in the Hilary term, Iannis Mourmouras (Bank of Greece) explored Aspects of the ECB’s monetary policy: State-of-play and future prospects, and in the Trinity term Governor Sejko (Bank of Albania) visited Oxford to make a presentation on Economic and financial challenges in South East Europe, and the role of the central bank as guardian of price and financial stability

The highlight of SEESOX’s political economy seminar programme in 2016/17 was, however, the surprise appearance of Poul Thomsen, Director of the IMF’s European Department and former IMF Mission Chief for Greece, as the co-guest of PEFM on March 22 at the European Studies Centre. He gave a very frank account of the IMF’s work on countries experiencing difficulties in the Eurozone, and on the Greek programme in particular. Despite being out of term, the seminar room was packed with students, academics and journalists. Notwithstanding the subject’s controversy, the audience was appreciative of Thomsen’s candour in which he addressed a particularly difficult subject.

Adam Bennett
SEESOX’s Programme on Contemporary Turkey produced many topical seminars and workshops, reflecting on significant internal developments in Turkey during the past year. One such important theme was the refugee crisis.

Gerald Knaus, founding chairman of the European Stability Initiative and spoke about the EU-Turkey refugee deal, focusing mostly on the implementation difficulties. He underlined that a liberal policy on borders and asylum in Europe should be based on the protection of the integrity of the Refugee Convention and its Article 33 and criticized those European states who saw trapping refugees in Greece, and closing the Balkan route, as a solution. He acknowledged that Europe had an interest in Turkey’s maintaining the rule of law, and defended the idea that visa liberation should be linked directly with Turkey’s success in ensuring it was a safe third country.

A day workshop on the same issue was held on 19 May 2017 in collaboration with Oxford’s COMPAS, entitled Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Reception, Economy and Governance. Participants in the workshop shared the initial results of their research on Syrian refugees living in Turkey. Particular attention was paid to the adaptation process of refugees, the hardships they face and how local and national politics react.

A second theme in last year’s activities dealt with the deterioration of democratic institutions in Turkey especially in the period following the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. On 2 November 2016, a panel composed by four at SEESOX associates, focused on the actual events of the coup, but also touched upon the political, economic and social aspects of Turkey before and after. The seminar started with Ezgi Başaran, describing in detail the events of the night of the coup. The presentation was rich in facts and in explaining the surprise and disbelief of many Turkish citizens in the first few hours of the coup. Mehmet Karlı discussed the evidence that linked the Gülen movement to the failed coup. Karlı first pointed out that 65% of the Turkish public is convinced that Fetullah Gülen is behind the coup attempt. Karlı explained the reasons for this belief. Karlı also talked about the results of the coup investigation (so far) as micro-level reasons for the belief that the movement staged the coup. However, Karlı cautioned the audience that the evidence is still very fresh and could change in the future. Deniz Ülke Arıboğan discussed the conditions for military coups in Turkish history arguing that the 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997 military interventions occurred when five preconditions were met: 1. Political instability 2. Economic fluctuation 3. Rising security threats 4. International recognition for a coup 5. The existence of an ambitious and devoted military staff. According to Arıboğan, the most serious issue prior to the 2016 coup was the rising security threat due to terrorism. The coup plotters were also not marginal in terms of their numbers by comparison only around 20 officers led the 1960 coup. But the other three preconditions were not present before the July 15 attempt, which explains the coup’s failure. Yaprak Gürsoy, referring to Samuel Finer’s disposition/opportunity model, argued that the disposition to intervene in Turkey has not changed much over the years, but the opportunity window had closed since 2007. Political elites (including the opposition parties), the top brass of the military, and public opinion have decisively condemned the military’s involvement in politics. This is partially why, if the coup had succeeded, it would have resulted in a bloody and repressive regime. Gürsoy concluded that the only reasonable explanation we have at the moment is that the putschists were desperate because they were going to be dismissed from the military for being Gülenists.

In December 2016, SEESOX organized a workshop entitled Turkey’s turmoil and the West’s conundrum: How should Europe and the US approach post-coup Turkey? The daylong workshop hosted eminent academics and experts on Turkey and the region. It consisted of three sessions each focusing on different aspects of the current turbulent relationships. The first session analysed "current developments which
On May 1, 2017, Assistant Professor of political science Koray Çalışkan of Boğaziçi University looked at Turkey’s current political regime as a new form of authoritarianism in the country and associating this substantive change with the worldwide rise of competitive authoritarianism.

Finally, a more historical talk took place on 30 November, Altuğ Günal, when Assistant Professor at Ege University, Izmir, and Academic Visitor at St Antony’s College, gave a talk on the 1974 Turkish military intervention on the island of Cyprus from the point of view of the “responsibility to protect” criteria and discussed prior events and developments in Turkey and Cyprus that led to the decision to intervene.

Ezgi Başaran

Frontline Turkey

Turkey is on the front line of the war which is consuming Syria and the Middle East. Its role is complicated by the long-running conflict with the Kurds on the Syrian border, a war that has killed as many as 80,000 people over the last three decades. In 2011 President Erdogan promised to make a deal with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party), but the talks marked a descent into assassinations, suicide bombings and the killing of civilians on both sides. The Kurdish peace process finally collapsed in 2015 with the spillover of the Syrian civil war. With ISIS moving through northern Iraq, Turkey has declared war on Western allies such as the Kurdish YPG (People’s Protection Unit) the military who rescued the Yezidis and fought with US backing in Kobane. Ezgi Başaran’s book, "Frontline Turkey" shows how the Kurds’ relationship with Turkey is at the very heart of the Middle Eastern crisis, and documents, through years old reporting, how Erdogan’s failure to bring peace is the key to understanding current events in Middle East. Başaran will hold a book launch for "Frontline Turkey" on 1 November 2017 at SEESOX.

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Between Military Rule and Democracy

BOOK LAUNCH 11 May, 2017

At a seminar on 11 May 2017, Dr Yaprak Gürsoy presented her forthcoming book ‘Between Military Rule and Democracy: Regime Consolidation in Greece, Turkey, and Beyond’ (2017, University of Michigan Press). Chaired by Othon Anastasakis, Laurence Whitehead and Stathis Kalyvas were the discussants. Building on Robert Dahl’s concept of polyarchy (1971), and particularly the distinction between the costs of toleration and the costs of suppression, Gürsoy argued that elite actors such as military officers support democracy, authoritarianism, or short-lived coups depending to a large degree on their perception of threats with respect to their interests. To substantiate these findings, Gürsoy performed both within-case and cross-case comparisons, looking at diverse coups that happened in Turkey and Greece over the past decades. Gürsoy suggested that these two neighbouring countries, both members of the NATO alliance, may be seen as ‘natural laboratories’. Archival research, secondary literature, and 150 interviews with decision makers in Greece and Turkey, support the conclusions of the book, which also includes chapters on Thailand and Egypt as shadow cases.

In their comments, both discussants praised the contribution made by the book. While Kalyvas commended the book’s effort to combine structuralist explanations on the one hand, and agency-based approaches on the other, in explaining the role of the military in democratic transitions, Whitehead emphasised the book’s contribution in taking the subject of civilian-military relations forward through its long-term perspective and the paired comparison.
**SEESOX seminars and events**

**Michaelmas 2016 (October-December)**

**Europe, its neighbourhood and the geopolitics of fear (Athens)**

Paul Chaisty (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Eugene Rogan (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Constantinos Filis (Institute of International Relations, Panteion University)

With the support of NATO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DIVISION, and MEGARON ATHENS

The geopolitics of fear: South East Europe in a triangle of uncertainty – Russia, Middle East, North Africa (London)

Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Franck Duvell (COMPASS, Oxford); David Madden (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Adis Merdzanovic (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Key-note speaker: Jamie Shea (NATO)

IN COOPERATION WITH GLOBAL STRATEGY FORUM

EU, Turkey and refugee policy

Gerald Knaus (European Stability Initiative)

Sarajevo’s Holiday Inn: On the frontline of politics and war

Kenneth Morrison (De Montfort University)

Turkey before and after July 15: The story of a failed coup

Ezgi Basaran (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Yaprak Gursoy (Bilgi University/St Antony’s College, Oxford); Mehmet Karlı (Galatasaray University); Deniz Ulke Arıboglan (Istanbul University/St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Bosnia’s Paralysed Peace

Christopher Bennett (Foundation for the Preservation of Historical Heritage, Sarajevo)

Discussant: Richard Caplan (Lincoln College, Oxford)

Brexit and its impact on the Western Balkans

Peter Sanfey (European Bank of Reconstruction and Development)

Discussant: Charles Enoch (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

A democratic challenge: Social reform in Greece under Syriza

George Katrougalos (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Greece)

Discussants: Pavlos Eleftheriadis (Mansfield College, Oxford); Bernhard Ebbinghaus (University of Mannheim); Marek Naczyk (Kellogg College, Oxford)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ESC AND THE SOCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT, OXFORD

Book launch: Conversations with Milosevic

Ivor Roberts (Trinity College, Oxford)

The economic challenges to Greece: What does the future hold?

Jens Bastian (Independent Economic Consultant & Financial Sector Advisor)

Discussant: Yaprak Gursoy (Bilgi University/St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Turkey’s 1974 Cyprus military intervention: Can it be evaluated in the context of responsibility to protect?

Altug Gunal (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Discussant: David Madden (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

**Hilary 2017 (January-March)**

Exit from democracy: illiberal governance in Turkey

Karabekir Akkoynulu (University of Graz, Austria)

Kerem Öktem (University of Graz, Austria)

The authoritarian turn: The Western Balkans’ move towards EU membership and away from democracy

Florian Bieber (University of Graz, Austria)

A Faustian pact? Selling the Rule of Law in South East Europe

Damir Banović (University of Sarajevo); Mehmet Karlı (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Does IMF conditionality lead to political illiberalism? A comparative South East European perspective

Merih Angin (Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford)

Alex Kentikelenis (Trinity College, Oxford) (tbc)

Saliha Metinsoy (Wadham College, Oxford)

IN COOPERATION WITH PEFM

Social constraints and the decision to leave: Emigration from Greece at times of crisis

Manolis Pratsinas (University of Macedonia)

The engagement predicament between Turkey and the West: What is to be done?

Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge and Yale)

Discussants: Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Ezgi Basaran (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Kalypso Nicolaidis (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Assessing varieties of populism: From Europe to Asia

Yaprak Gürsoy (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Discussant: Michael Freedeen (Mansfield College, Oxford)

Illiberalism and post-ideology party politics in South East Europe

Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Adis Merdzanovic (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Turkey and the West: Prospects and recommendations for restoring trust

Othon Anastasakis (St Antony’s College, Oxford); David Madden (St Antony’s College, Oxford); Jonathan Scheele (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

IN COOPERATION WITH GLOBAL STRATEGY FORUM

Greece and the Euro Zone: The IMF perspective

Poul Thomsen (IMF)

IN COOPERATION WITH PEFM

**Trinity 2017 (April-June)**

Reporting from the front: Turkey’s constitutional referendum of April 16

Stefan Szwed (International Observer of the Turkish Referendum)

Online dynamics of the far-right and the far-left in Greece

Lamprini Rori (St Antony’s College, Oxford)

Discussant: Jonathan Bright (Oxford Internet Institute)
The new political regime of Turkey in comparative perspective

Koray Çalışkan (Bogazici University)

Between Military Rule and Democracy: Regime Consolidation in Greece, Turkey, and Beyond

Yapraş Gürsoy (St Anthony’s College, Oxford)

Discussants: Laurence Whitehead (Nuffield College, Oxford); Stathis Kalyvas (Yale University)

SEESOX ANNUAL LECTURE
Majoritarian futures in Europe and beyond

Ivan Krastev (Centre for Liberal Strategies, Bulgaria)

Memories of Empire and Entry into International Society: views from the European periphery

Richard Caplan (Linacre College, Oxford); Filip Ejdus (Bristol University), Vjosa Muslu (Free University of Brussels), Jan Zielonka (St Anthony’s College, Oxford)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ESC AND CIS

Why locals can’t own international interventions: evidence from civilian CSDP missions

Filip Ejdus (Bristol University)

Discussant: Richard Caplan (Linacre College)

Economic and financial challenges in South East Europe

Gent Sejko (Governor, Bank of Albania)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH PEFM

Conferences and workshops

CONFERENCE (London) September 2016
Enterprising diasporas: From brain drain to brain gain
IN ASSOCIATION WITH RELOAD GREECE AND THE LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

CONFERENCE (Tirana) October 2016
Aligning monetary policy with financial stability: Objectives, responses and interaction in times of uncertainty
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BANK OF ALBANIA

WORKSHOP (Oxford) December 2016
How the West should approach Turkey after July 15

CONFERENCE (Oxford) April 2017
Crossings: Negotiating borders and boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE MODERN LANGUAGES FACULTY, OXFORD, AND THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, OXFORD

SEESOX / A. G. LEVENTIS CONFERENCE June 2017
Right-wing and Left-wing radicalisation in contemporary European Democracies: Cross-theoretical perspectives

In his letter, Othon has written about last year’s activities and our exciting new flagship programme, the Diaspora Project: which is indeed aspirational. This year saw the launch of the interactive map, and the inaugural meeting in Oxford of the Hellenic Advisory Board.

In the coming year, we shall arrange additional research activities and seminars to maintain the reputation of SEESOX for innovative and authoritative work. One is a day-long workshop which will examine the continuities and discontinuities between former Yugoslavia and its successor states: this is intended to lead to a book incorporating all contributions. Our work on the Greek diaspora will entail original research and a major conference at the end of the academic year. Our annual seminar series, in Hilary Term 2018, will as usual focus on the challenges to our region from the perspectives of security, political economy, social change and historical heritage. We plan to commemorate the centenary of the ending of the Great War next year by relaunching our recently published edited volume Balkan Legacies of the Great War. We shall continue to address regional geo-politics and geo-economics in a fast changing world.

The key to much of our work is outreach and the wish to be relevant to both the scholarly and to the policy-making community. In light of this we shall continue to develop our activities, partnerships and networking well beyond the world of Oxford and the UK.

David Madden

FORTHCOMING EVENT
SYMPOSIUM
Revisiting Yugoslavia in the shadow of the present: Continuities and discontinuities
23 November, 2017
9 a.m.-6 p.m.
European Studies Centre
(Registration required)

Convenors: Othon Anastasakis, Adam Bennett, David Madden, Adis Merdzanovic

Team SEESOX 2016-17 at the weekly operations meeting
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With thanks to the contributors:
Ezgi Başaran, Adam Bennett, Charles Enoch, Yaprak Gürsoy, Antonis Kamaras, Mehmet Karlı, David Madden, Adis Merdzanovic, Kalypso Nicolaïdis, Manolis Pratsinakis, Lamprini Rori, Jonathan Scheele

5th Annual Ambassadors’ Forum

On 26 April, SEESOX hosted its Annual Ambassadors’ Forum at St Antony’s College, University of Oxford. The round table lunch and discussion brought together the region’s Ambassadors in London (nine Heads of Mission and four Deputies) together with members of Team SEESOX for a free-flowing and strategic exchange of views and ideas. The main issues discussed were how the rise in illiberalism elsewhere in Europe and the world was reflected in the region; the consequences for the region of Brexit and other political developments in the EU; and economic trends and the welcome appearance of some green shoots after a period of stagnation. Ambassadors were briefed on the latest flagship SEESOX programme, the Diaspora Project. There was full agreement on the importance and value of the Ambassadors’ Forum, and the need to continue this excellent tradition of open and wide-ranging dialogue.

Inaugural meeting of the Hellenic Advisory Board

The inaugural meeting of the Board took place in Oxford on 26 May. The Greek members arrived in time for a tour of the most prestigious University buildings (the Sheldonian and the Bodleian Library) and some of its treasures (including a selection of early Greek manuscripts), before a meeting with the Chancellor. This was followed by drinks and lunch with the Chancellor in Balliol College, before the Board meeting in the afternoon.

The Board was briefed on the work, output and outreach of SEESOX; and especially about the new flagship Diaspora Project, which aroused much positive discussion.

Lord Patten (centre front) with the Hellenic Board members and SEESOX colleagues

Team SEESOX with the region’s Ambassadors to the UK