

Unity amidst Variety? Intellectual Foundations and Requirements for an Enlarged Europe

I. Objectives

Since the European Union started out on the road of eastward enlargement in the early 1990s there has been a great deal of progress at the political level which has reached a climax with the accession of eight eastern and central European states on May 1, 2004.

Nevertheless, there is still a very long way to go before we achieve actual unity in Europe. The mergence of “East” and “West” is often beset with problems. Mistrust or ignorance make themselves apparent, and frequently the process of understanding tends to be more than difficult.

Bearing this in mind, the Volkswagen Foundation has set up this funding initiative in 2000 to promote historical and contemporary research into eastern central, eastern and south-eastern Europe. Its objectives are to provide new insights into the variety and heterogeneity of this area with respect to its relations and connections with the rest of Europe, thereby enabling a better comprehension of the foundations and requirements of current endeavors to enlarge the European Union. Political, social and economic considerations are to be taken into account together with aspects of intellectual and cultural life. The primary objective is to identify not only the similarities and parallels but also the differences and peculiarities with regard to developments in other parts of Europe and to examine processes of

mutual influence and interpenetration of different cultures. For it is only under the consideration of comparisons and interactions between states and cultural spaces that integration into a pan-European context may become possible.

Research into the requirements and foundations of an enlarged Europe cannot be restricted to a national scale. It calls for an international perspective necessitating cross-border cooperation between researchers in different countries. Consequently, support can only be provided for research projects involving close cooperation between German scholars and partners in other countries, in particular eastern Europe. The Foundation, therefore, expects proposals to entail substantial participation of eastern European scholars, which should be reflected in a mutual development of common concepts and the joint submission of applications. An additional requirement is that the proposed projects also generate impulses for enhancing academic capacity in eastern Europe, e.g. by providing support for junior scholars.

Funding will be available to all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. Since an interdisciplinary approach would appear pertinent for a variety of issues in question, the Foundation attaches great importance to this type of cooperation.

II. Range of topics

In this funding initiative the Foundation assumes a pragmatic definition of eastern Europe: it starts at the eastern borders of Germany, Austria and Italy and covers eastern central Europe as well as eastern and south-eastern Europe. No precise geographical demarcation has been decided upon with regard to the eastern and south-eastern borders in order to avoid any prejudgement of Europe's outer boundaries as well as to open a window on the great variety of different cultures, traditions and developments in this region. The range of possible topics not only embraces issues surrounding economic, social and political developments found usually at the center of current debates, but also other aspects such as national, ethnic or religious identities, legal traditions, normative standards and systems of values, attitudes and life styles, literature, music and art, etc.

The topics can be approached from either a historical or a contemporary perspective. Projects involving research into current issues and developments should be aimed at the "relevance of history" for the topic in question. Such research may include investigations into formation of identity, self-perception and perception of others, or prejudice structures as well as analysis of the path-dependency of current transformation processes or empirical research into mentalities. Other important aspects are the treatment of one's own history, the role of historical experience in public political debates or the challenges arising from the normative project of European "unity".

Applications for historically based investigations are expected to explain their relevance for the present situation. This is because the Foundation's main interest is directed at those themes which could elicit a better understanding of contemporary issues in Europe. Since the divergence of central developments extends far back into history and pertinent conti-

nity patterns become evident at an early stage, the possible investigation period stretches from the present back to the Middle Ages.

The research – both historical and contemporary – should not deal with the respective subject matter in isolation, but place it in a pan-European context. This entails examination of similarities and differences, processes of convergence and divergence, mutual interpenetration and transfer, imitation as well as adaptation or demarcation. The range of topics may include, for example, not only research into the multifarious relationships between France or Germany and eastern Europe, but also comparative studies of Poland on the one hand and Ireland or Spain on the other, countries with numerous parallels with regard to their development. Such studies should have at least one point of reference associated with eastern Europe, while the other reference point(s) can be anywhere in Europe.

III. Funding possibilities

The following are eligible for funding within this funding initiative, either separately or in conjunction with one another:

- Bilateral and multilateral research projects with international participation can be supported with personnel as well as non-personnel funding. Scholars from eastern Europe can participate in the projects either under work contracts or by being awarded research grants. For non-German cooperation partners located in the "West", the Foundation is only able to bear additional costs arising directly from the cooperation. It is possible to apply for funds to pay for the coordination of the project. Within the framework of large-scale projects university professors can apply for sabbaticals (6 to 24 months) in order to enable them to contribute substantial research. (In such cases

the Foundation is willing to pay for the stand-in teaching substitution for the duration of the sabbatical.)

- International and interdisciplinary workshops for limited numbers of participants (max. 40) which must involve junior scholars. At least half the participants should come from countries outside of Germany, above all from eastern Europe. If such workshops do not take place within funded projects they should be aimed at identifying topics of mutual interest that may pave the way for future joint research projects. Such events may also take place outside of Germany.
- Junior scholars (doctoral and post-doctoral) by awarding grants within the framework of research and training projects. The Foundation wishes to particularly support small groups of junior scholars including non-German participants. Individual scholarships can only be awarded in the framework of large-scale research projects.
- Summer schools for teaching basic methods and subjects that involve junior scholars from different countries. The number of participants should not exceed 60 persons.

IV. The attached checklist contains details on how applications should be made.

The Foundation can provide funding only to academic institutions. Hence, applicants who are not members of universities or of some other well-established research institutes must also submit details on the legal status, statutes, trustees and boards, non-profit status, budgeting and auditing of their respective institution. If available, applicants are also required to supply an annual report of their institution.

The Foundation does not consider applications which have also been submitted in the same or similar form to other funding institutions.

Please submit your application electronically (preferably via e-mail with application and appendices as separate pdf-files) and also in hard copy. The next **deadline** for the submission of applications is **August 1, 2007**.

V. Information

More details on this funding initiative can be obtained from the office of the Volkswagen Foundation.

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Checklist for applications within the funding initiative

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There are no standard requirements regarding the form of the application, which may be submitted to the Volkswagen Foundation either in German or in English (then to include a summary in German). Applications should be submitted jointly by all respective partners and include detailed information on the proposed cooperation. Especially in the case of complex cooperation projects it would be helpful to submit an outline of the proposed project before formulating the final application.

For considering a proposal a hard copy of the application is needed as well as an electronic version (preferably to be sent via e-mail as pdf-file with separate files for enclosures). A **project application** should include the following information:

- Concise, informative title of the proposed project
- Summary (1 page) of objective and implementation
- German abstract (up to three pages), summarizing the objectives and substantiation of the project and its implementation
- Detailed presentation: status of research, substantiation, objectives, methods, hypotheses, expected results (max. 20 pages)
- Name, details of qualifications and fields, including pertinent previous experience where applicable, of the key persons to work on the project
- Detailed information with regard to the interdisciplinary and international character of the cooperation, to include details of how important contacts are to be maintained
- Working program and time schedule, including distribution of tasks among collaborators
- Budget broken down into personnel costs (academic personnel, other personnel, scholarships), periodic (travel expenses and other running costs, e.g. consumables) as well as non-recurring material expenses (equipment and other non-recurring purchases, e.g. literature) in **euros**; computer equipment requirement would need justifying in detail
- Declaration that no same or similar application has been submitted to any other funding institution
- Name and address of proposed recipient institution.

Applications for the funding of **scholarly meetings** (symposia and summer schools) should contain **additional** information with regard to:

- Place, date and duration of the proposed event
- The scientific agenda including timetable
- The (tentative) list of speakers and participants to be invited, together with reasons for their selection and information on any acceptances (at least of those presenting papers) already received.