

Franco-German Fall Academy 2017 – The Rise of Populism in Europe –

Policy perspectives from the young generation

Overview

The binational Franco-German Fall Academy “*The Rise of Populism in Europe*” aims to bring together members of the German student think tank *Studentenforum im Tönissteiner Kreis e.V.* and the French student network *Conférence Olivaint* for a collaborative policy project. Being members of the *Politeia Network*, both organisations have already worked together successfully in the past, and have set a new agenda for this year: deciphering populism through Franco-German perspectives with a particular focus on younger generations. In deep-dive sessions, the participants will meet with French and German decision-makers, social scientists, journalists and voters. The Fall Academy will be held in Berlin and Paris and bring together 20 students and young professionals from both France and Germany. The participants will submit a policy paper with clear policy recommendations to European decision-makers in both countries.

Project Outline

During the course of the Academy, the participants will explore the roots, dynamics and consequences of populism from various angles. Four key policy areas, which are highly related to topics found in populist discourse and identified as particularly important to the younger generation, will be vital: **economic policy** with a particular emphasis on labour policy, **education policy**, **migration policy** and **EU policy**. The participants will also review democratisation efforts of political institutions as well as citizens’ possibilities to become actively involved. The Academy’s overall programme will include a preparatory working phase in small groups, meetings with experts and guests, input and discussion rounds and working sessions. The goal of the academy is the drafting of a policy recommendation paper. Thus, participants pursue a direct impact on the current state of affairs by addressing politicians, policy-makers and related experts in this field. The policy paper seeks to formulate concrete recommendations to deal with populism in the French, German and European context.

The Topic of Populism

Populism, euroscepticism and political extremism are not only the ghosts of contemporary Europe, they have also become part of its everyday reality. The Brexit referendum, the election of Donald Trump and the high percentage of *Front National* (FN) voters have made clear a shift in political paradigms, both in Europe and beyond. In all European countries, populism seems to have increased division, not unity. Moreover, the stability of the European Union, its societies and communities are at stake. Two main strategies for their political success can be identified. Firstly, populist political positions usually provide simplified solutions to complex issues that our societies face today. Secondly, deliberate manipulation or the complete denial of facts for the sake of attention and admiration has become one of the most effective instruments of populist movements.

Populist parties influence the public opinion, election campaigns and policy processes in both, France and Germany. The *Front National* was established several decades ago. But only recently, the extreme right-wing party succeeded to enhance its image and transform itself from a marginal to a leading and popular opposition

party in France. The German *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), though a relatively new phenomenon, has successfully managed to obtain mandates in every single newly elected federal state parliament. The AfD will most likely enter the national parliament of Germany after the elections this fall. So far, neither of the parties has succeeded to form more than a populist opposition. However, their rise poses critical questions to the functionality of contemporary democracies and the trust and support of them by its citizens.

How can populism be defined? What are possible explanations for the rise of populism in Europe? What drives populist politicians and parties? What are the goals of their voters? Which factors contributed to their sudden success? What are the strategies and goals of the populist movements in both countries? Are the roots and implications for populism in Germany and France similar or do they differ? And if so, in which ways? Do populists oppose democratic principles or do they channel legitimate criticism of their societies and political systems? And how can political structures and institutions as well as civil society combat populist movements without silencing them?

These questions will be key at the Franco-German Fall Academy and guide the participants throughout the workshops and discussions. The academy will lay a particular focus on Europe's young generation, considering both the perspective of the young generation towards populist arguments and current political controversies as well as the solutions young Europeans see to these issues. The thrust of this Fall Academy will therefore be: **Which political measures does the young generation in France and Germany demand to be implemented both on a national and on a European level in regard to populism?**

Programme of the Fall Academy

The agenda of the Fall Academy is set out for a total of 13 days, comprising 6 days in Paris and 7 days in Berlin. The conference in Paris will take place from 25th to 30th of September 2017, while its counterpart in Berlin will be held from 31st of October to 6th of November 2017. Various meetings, events, and activities in each capital aim to provide a closer look at the aftermath of the recent federal elections of each host country's situation. Each day will be tailored to a specific area regarding populism; this is to say the role of the media, political campaigns and electoral behaviour, social and historical trajectories and social policy research. The meetings will be followed by deep-dive discussions and working sessions among the participants. After the first conference part in Paris a first summary will be drafted. This first draft will lead up to the actual policy recommendation paper, finalised after the completion of the Fall Academy with the second conference part in Berlin. It will be handed over to the respective Ministers of State for European Affairs in the Quai d'Orsay and Auswärtiges Amt who are as well responsible for the Franco-German Cooperation. This is to say *Nathalie Loiseau* on the French and *Michael Roth* or his successor on the German side.

The programme will consist of three distinctive parts. For the first part, the selected participants will split into four working groups, each dedicated to one of the aforementioned policy areas. The working groups, each including both French and German participants, will prepare background information regarding their policy field (both in the French and German context) and identify relevant questions and issues to be explored and discussed during the following programme parts. Additionally, each group will prepare a short presentation for the other working groups.

During the second part, the participants will gather in Paris and Berlin. Each session will focus on the situation of the respective countries. Each day will be dedicated to one of the policy areas mentioned above. As to the in-depth sessions, the participants will visit relevant institutions and meet with either politicians, policy experts, social scientists, journalists or voters. The participants of the Academy will also visit neighbourhoods, which have shown a large increase in populist support measured by voter turnout. During these "Sur-Place-Dialogues" participants will have the chance to engage directly with voters and citizens. Thus, they will gain valuable insights on the latter's attitudes and positions regarding the political system, specific policies and public

controversies. This format aims for the participants to obtain a better understanding of the origins, the decisive factors and the dynamics of populism.

At the end of the programme, all participants will take stock and reach conclusions based on their experiences and insights throughout the academy. This will serve as a basis for the policy recommendation paper.

Schedule Paris

Day 1 25/09 Defining Populism

Exchange with Jean-Yves Camus about the history of the Front national.

Day 2 26/09 Economics

Exchange and discussions with experts from the economic and financial area about Euro (to be confirmed: Jean-Pierre Allegret, CNRS/Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense).

Visit of the OECD and presentation of the OECD's best practice principles.

Day 3 27/09 Social Politics

Deep-dive sessions and discussions with members of different commissions of the French Senate
Meeting with the President of the Senate

Debate between a representative of Front National (FN) and a representative of "Les Republicains"

Day 4 28/09 European Affairs

Conference held by Jean-Luc Sauron, member of the Conseil d'Etat and professor of European law.

Meetings with various think tanks (e.g. Jacques Delors Institute, Robert Schumann Foundation) and Philippe Moreau-Defarges, a former French diplomat and expert in geopolitics and international relations.

Day 5 29/09 Security and Migration Policy

Deep-dive session with Hans Stark, general secretary of the Study Committee for French-German relations (cerf).

Meeting and discussion with diplomats at the German Embassy in Paris

Schedule Berlin

Day 1 31/10 Social and Educational Politics

Deep-dive sessions with stakeholders from political parties (i.e. CDU/CSU, SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Die Linke, FDP, AfD)

To be confirmed:
Franziska Brantner (MdB Die Grünen)
Arne Lietz (MdEP SPD)

Day 2 01/11 European Affairs

Discussion with journalists, political scientists and experts working on populism

To be confirmed:
Tamara Anthony (WDR)
Lena Kampf (FAZ)
Inga Michler (Die Welt)

Day 3 02/11 Democratisation and Civic Participation

Sur-Place-Visit in Berlin-Marzahn-Hellersdorf and Berlin-Lichtenberg: Meeting with people from local sectional offices of political parties and associations.

Youth Dialogue: Exchange with young people on their outlooks on populism

Alternative: Investigative City Walk

Day 5 03/11 Security and Migration Policy

Visit of a relevant think tank or research institution

Day 6 04/11 Policy Paper

Working Session: final draft of the academy's policy recommendation paper
Under the support of Marcus Bleinroth, German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Moira Kettner, German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

The Organisations

Studentenforum im Tönissteiner Kreis e.V.

The Studentenforum im Tönissteiner Kreis e.V. is a German network of students aspiring to an international career which aims to contribute to a globally interconnected society. Based on the motivation and the interdisciplinary background of its members, the Studentenforum seeks to develop innovative and substantiated contributions to current public debates. Bilateral and international academies are an integral element of the organisation's annual event calendar. The network continuously seeks to work together with

other student networks as partner organisations from around the world to create in-depth academic, practical and intercultural experiences for its participants.

Conférence Olivaint

Established in 1875, the Conférence Olivaint is the oldest student society in France. The association was set up to offer political education for French students. Its activities include weekly conferences with personalities from the political and economic spheres and civil society speaking on current affairs; debating sessions with other French student societies, commissions centred around a specific topic as well as study trips within France and abroad. The Conférence Olivaint fosters an international outlook for its members and has always engaged in cross-cultural exchanges. The association is a founding member of the Politeia Network.

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