



**International Conference**  
**Fulda University of Applied Sciences**  
**July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**

**Prof. Dr. Claudia Wiesner**

## **Call for Papers: Theorising the EU's crisis**

**On behalf of Fulda Research Centre for Intercultural Communication and European Studies (CINTEUS) as well as Arbeitskreis Europäische Integration e.V. (AEI), we invite paper proposals for a fully-funded interdisciplinary conference on the topic of "theorizing the EU's Crisis":**

The European Union is regarded to be in a severe crisis at least since 2008, when the financial crisis began to hit. This labelling brings about several questions.

The first ones concern the concept of crisis as such - crisis is a concept that is often criticised for both being used in inflationary manner and be a catch-all concept. The sole example of the EU underlines this: since the early days of integration, "crisis talk" regularly came up. If we are willing to speak about crises, we can also argue that in recent years the EU has struggled to a series of multiple and near-endless challenges that each have been termed "crises" - regarding the Eurozone, the situation in Ukraine, the question of migration, and the Brexit vote as well as the Brexit procedure. These critical issues were accompanied by and/or have contributed to a questioning of the EU's legitimacy, its governance structures, and the integration project itself, in order for academia to speak of a crisis of the EU altogether or even a "polycrisis". These critical issues and the bespoke crises have generated their own literatures.

But, second and nevertheless, it is contested what the crisis - presuming there is one - consists in: is it an institutional crisis, showing us the limits of the EU's current institutional system? Is it a policy and effectiveness crisis that would only necessitate more efficient policies and governance structures? Is it a crisis of trust and support in the EU, as Eurobarometer seemed to indicate for some time during the peak of austerity politics? Is it a crisis of commitment of the member state governments towards the common goals of the EU, leading to severe conflicts about issues such as migration policy and

the safeguarding of democratic standards? Is it a crisis of EU over-regulation, as the Brexiteers claimed? Is it maybe an overall crisis of representative democracy, as a rising support for right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties in Europe indicates?

Third, there has been little analysis of Europe's multifaceted crisis from a more theoretical standpoint. The symptoms that have been sketched have been discussed in terms of EU integration theory, but much less so in terms of their social and philosophical impacts and backgrounds. The leading argument for the planned conference is accordingly that the EU's crisis, or what is labelled and discussed as such, can on the one hand be interpreted as a symptom of a decisive lack, i.e., a lack of an idea of a common European good. On the other hand, values and principles that have been traditionally associated with Europe, such as solidarity, human rights, freedom and democracy, are put in question by the EU's current policies.

Against this backdrop, it is the goal of the conference to *theorise the EU's crisis* and its linkages to society, politics and the state, raising questions such as the ones named above and broadly following the three lines of argument that were sketched:

- First, concerning the usage of the concept of crisis, asking for example: Is the concept of crisis a kind of empty signifier? How can the crisis be grasped? Or can it be argued that there is no crisis? Why are Europeans so predisposed to think in terms of crisis? What are the political consequences of labelling crises as such?

- Second, we will discuss the character of the crises/crisis and its symptoms: What is the crisis about? What does the crisis – if there is one – consist in? What are the general conflict lines that become virulent= What are the elements of a crisis? Brexit, migration, financial crisis, sovereign debt crisis, crisis of democracy...or more ? Is there a crisis of integration, or one of democracy, altogether?

- Third, we aim to address the lacunae of the current debate by inviting critical scholars to comment on the crisis of European integration as they see it, tackling especially the social and philosophical roots of the problems mentioned and the question of democratic principles.

**We invite papers dealing with one or several of these topics.**

**The conference is fully funded, including travel, meals and accommodation.**

**Please send your paper abstracts to: [Claudia.wiesner@sk-hs-fulda.de](mailto:Claudia.wiesner@sk-hs-fulda.de)**

**Deadline: april 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Hochschule Fulda**  
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