ECPR NEWS

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Over 1,600 papers were proposed for the Fourth ECPR General Conference, making it the most popular Conference to date. Once the closing date had passed, the academic convenors had the enormous task ahead of them of selecting papers and creating panels; their hard work has paid off though and an exciting academic content has now been produced. Registration is now open, so please see our website for further details on the academic programme, receptions and social events, hotels, excursions and tourist information and for details on how to register

http://wwwessexacuk/ecpr/events/generalconference/pisa/indexaspx

Reduced registration fees are available to participants who also attend the Sixth Pan-European International Relations Conference, which is being held in Turin from 12 to 15 September 2007. Please see their website at: http://wwwsgirorg/conference2007/indexhtm



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announcing the nelson w. polsby memorial fund

The Nelson W. Polsby Memorial Graduate Student Fund has been established at UC Berkeley to support graduate students who are interested in studying US Congress (or in years when someone can't be found who is studying Congress, the US Presidency or US political parties).

Anyone interested in contributing can visit this link: http://www.igs.berkeley.edu/announcements/polsbyfund, or send a cheque made out to 'Nelson W. Polsby Memorial Graduate Student Fund' to:

Attn: Mary Beth Herzoff
College of Letters & Science
University of California, Berkeley
2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 300
Berkeley, CA 94720-2930

Alternatively, credit card donations can be made by calling Mary Beth at:

Phone: (+1) 510 642 8405
Cell: (+1) 415 516 1090

A European Memorial meeting for Nelson W. Polsby will take place on Saturday 13 October at 2.00 pm in Worcester College, Oxford. Further details will be available closer to the time, but in the meantime anyone who wishes to can contact Alan Ware (alan.ware@worc.ox.ac.uk) for more information.

religion and politics standing group

The Religion and Politics Standing Group (SG) was formed in February 2006 and currently has around eighty members. A newsletter is distributed three times a year. Its aims are:

- to help information circulate between the Group's members about ongoing research projects and academic activities in the given field;
- to develop rigorous analyses, in various – domestic, transnational and international – contexts of the political involvement of religious actors both in Europe and globally;
- to initiate new research agendas according to the interests of the members of the Standing Group;
- to provide regular relevant information to interested members in the form of a newsletter and, at some future stage, a web page;
- to contribute to the activities of the ECPR through workshop initiatives and other academic activities.

The background to the founding of the Standing Group is that many political scientists and international relations experts now agree that religious organisations are often also significant political actors,

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operating in domestic and/or international contexts. In recent years, especially since the end of the Cold War in 1989, religion has regularly impacted upon politics, both in Europe and elsewhere. While religion's precise influence or impact will of course differ from country to country and international context to international context, it will usually be most politically significant in one of two ways: encouraging or helping to rectify political conflicts. This indicates that religion can have various important functions serving to engender and/or significantly influence people's and group values. Consequently, religion often has a significant impact on both domestic and international politics; often in practice these spheres interact. In short, fully to understand many current political outcomes – both in Europe and elsewhere – it is important to factor in when relevant the political influences of various religious actors.

It was felt that a new SG was needed because there was no European-wide or ECPR-based research group concerned with the issue of 'religion and politics'. Over the previous years, Jeffrey Haynes had organised a workshop at the ECPR Joint Sessions in 1995 ('Religion and Politics in the Third World', University of Bordeaux, April), as well as a Section, 'Religion and International Relations', comprising nine panels, at the Third ECPR General Conference, Corvinus University of Budapest, in September 2005. He also organised a panel on the theme of 'Religion and International Relations', at the Twentieth International Political Science Association World Congress, Fukuoka, Japan, in July 2006. Most of the applicants to present papers at these three events were Europe-based, with a great majority at ECPR-member institutions. Thus, it appeared not only that there was consistent interest in the topic of 'religion and politics' among Europe-based scholars but also that there was a clear need – between conferences – to develop and institutionalise a research network on this theme. The Religion and Politics SG sought to fulfil this aim.

Reflecting these general concerns, the Standing Group exists to encourage the formation and development of a network of interested researchers. A key aim is to try to answer questions about the political impact of religious actors and to disseminate research findings. A crucial way to achieve these objectives is to submit regular proposals for relevant Sections, Panels and Workshops at both the ECPR annual Joint Sessions and biennial general conferences.

Jeffrey Haynes, convenor of the Standing Group, is directing a workshop at the May 2007 Joint Sessions in Helsinki, on the theme of 'Religion and Politics: Conflict or Cooperation?'. Twenty-four participants will take part in the workshop. Finally, he is also convening a six-panel Section, with nineteen participants, at the forthcoming SG on International Relations conference, to be held in Turin in September 2007.

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