

Overview – Description of project in general terms

Project Title

The Challenges of Europeanisation: Mediating between National and European Identities in South Eastern Europe (SEE)

Acronym: **SEUM** (SEE-EU Mediation)

Subject area

The research project SEUM examines the interrelatedness between processes of integration and national(-ist) reactions to Europeanisation in the region. By comparing similarities and differences in these reactions the researchers take into account distinct cultural and political histories of the formation of national identity among the selected countries. By interrogating different national ways of claiming and formulation of supranational European identity we will analyse how **political and cultural legacies** get in on current (de-) constructions of identities relating to “European values” like democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, gender equality etc.

Our **comparative socio-cultural analysis** will be **backed by legal and political expertise** to investigate the actions and reactions in the politico-legal process of negotiations **between the European Union and selected SEE-candidate countries**.

We therefore compare an older member state (Austria), a younger member state (Slovenia), a soon-to-be member state (Croatia) and two countries awaiting accession (Serbia and FYR of Macedonia).

Our comparative study builds on already existing scientific results of how culturally, politically, historically diverse countries formulated their newly acquired national – and European! – identities in relation to the respective multicultural and multiethnic experiences in the past. Being all part of former empires which covered the historical map of the region – the Ottoman, the Habsburg, and, conditionally called so, the “Yugoslav empire” – they have the experience of living in a supra-state formation in which alternative, cosmopolitan and/or hybrid collective identities were favoured to the national ones. Moreover, by being part of two or three multiethnic supra-state formations in a relatively brief period of time, the selected countries now grant an ample opportunity to further **analyse the shifting sites of belonging and the unresolved tensions**. Hence, the revival of nostalgia for the past empires maybe also attests of the power of multiple, national and supranational, belonging which could be incorporated in cultural politics of identity and citizenship not only in the region, but in the EU as a whole.

Main project objectives

The major objective of the submitted project proposal is to build a larger consortium with new partners from SEE based on the existing collaborations of Austria and Slovenia (established as part of the OeAD Mobility Grant SI 05/2009). It is envisaged to build on already elaborated scientific results and to add new expertise from SEE-research institutions with the aim of **designing a collaborative research project for joint submission to the EU 7th FP** under Austrian co-ordination. For drafting a promising joint project proposal we will:

- exchange our know-how and broaden our expertise by establishing a **common platform (website)** that will be open to the public for receiving additional input by stake holders and all people interested in the subject area
- discuss our research findings at an internal **project meeting at the University of Zadar**
- discuss our ideas for joint submission to the EU 7th FP with practitioners (NGOs, EU representatives etc.) at a **conference at the University of Vienna**
- gather our scientific knowledge for a **joint publication** that shall be the basis for the project proposal to the 7th framework programme.

We hereby strengthen and widen a network of both experienced scholars and young researchers in Austria, Slovenia, FYR of Macedonia, Croatia and Serbia. The objective is to expand, deepen and link previous research results, to animate further scientific exchange and dissemination. Of high importance to us is to stimulate EU-wide public debate on the special challenges of Europeanisation for questions of identity in the quite young SEE-nation states.