



SÜDOSTEUROPA-
GESELLSCHAFT

International University Week / Internationale Hochschulwoche 2018

***The Protection of Nature and the Environment in Southeast Europe:
Players, Discourses, Strategies of Action***

Akademie für Politische Bildung / Academy for Civic Education Tutzing,

October 1 to 5, 2018

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

for master and doctoral students and post-doc students (Habiltierende)



From October 1 to 5, 2018, the Southeast Europe Association (SOG) will hold its 57. International University Week / Internationale Hochschulwoche. The cooperation partner is the Akademie für Politische Bildung in Tutzing. The International University Week is one of the SOG's most important events addressing younger scientists (master and doctoral students as well as those working on a Habilitation) from the German-speaking countries, from Southeast Europe and the wider region of Europe.

This year's event focuses on the subject **The Protection of Nature and the Environment in Southeast Europe: Players, Discourses, Strategies of Action** under the scientific direction of **Dr. Sonja Schüler** (Fribourg / Switzerland). Further information concerning the current program version can be found at: www.sogde.org

Master and doctoral students as well as those working on a Habilitation coming from the German-speaking countries, Southeast Europe and the wider region of Europe and focusing in their studies on Europe's southeastern parts are cordially invited to apply for participation.

Background

In the wider region of Southeast Europe the notion of nature is connected with various attributions of meaning which are at least partly rooted in history: Nature is perceived, framed and treated as an esthetical symbol, an economically important resource, a cultural heritage and a value which is also of importance for the sense of national identities. In the former socialist countries of the region environmental activism and the positive commitment to nature draw considerable symbolic power from the pro-democracy mobilizations of the socialist past. Today, demands for the protection of nature and the environment are brought forward in manifold public discussion forums and spheres of negotiation. Political and economic actors, "green" parties, social movements and different forms of social self-organization take an active part in public discourses concerning environmentally relevant attributions of meanings and concerning the use and the management of natural resources. These discourses take place in a complex field of tension among European and national legal environmental obligations, (power) political calculation and maneuvering, demands for economic growth, efficiency and competitiveness and social relationships to nature. Frequently they reveal important political and social cleavages and far-reaching conflicts and competitions of interests and demands.

In the course of the International University Week we will consider environmentally-relevant fields of action and spheres of negotiation with their inherent conflicting goals and competitions of interests. We will pay particular attention to the political and nonstate key players which struggle for the power of interpretation in environmentally-relevant information and decision-making processes. In this context it is essential to grasp and to analyze their problem constructions and patterns of action and interpretation.

It will be important to discuss the following questions (amongst others):

- How are relevant key terms (nature, environment, ecology, sustainability...) framed in local and national discourses? Which everyday cultural meanings of these terms can be grasped? Which role do these interpretative patterns play for environmental policies and for everyday life?
- In how far do local volunteer work and social commitment on the local level represent social resources of relevance for the protection of nature and the environment and which ideas, values and motivations shape the concepts of nature in this sphere of action?
- Which problem definitions and attributions of responsibility do the framings of environmentally-relevant actors reflect? Which social and political cleavages and formal and informal power constellations become obvious?
- What impact do professionalized national and supra-national environmental associations and networks really have?
- Which ambiguities concerning the capacity to act and the legitimacy of various political and nonstate actors can be detected?
- Last but not least it is important to identify in how far European funds and other EU initiatives really complement regional and national strategies.

In conclusion we should be able to discuss

- Whether and in how far specific “western” and “southeastern” discourses regarding environmentally-relevant developments, challenges and priorities of action need to be distinguished
- Whether and in how far local informal interest groups and social movements maybe even represent a “southeastern” counterpart to western-shaped, institutionalized and formalized concepts of political ecology.

The Southeast Europe Association`s International University Weeks are aimed at promoting scientific discussions and international networking of leading specialists and younger scientists carrying out analytical work on subjects changing every year. This year`s University Week addresses students, researchers and scientists from various disciplines, especially from **Sociology, Political Science, Cultural Studies, Media and Communication Studies, History, Economic Sciences, International Relations, Environmental Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies etc.** from east and west. Thus the University Weeks support the scientific and academic work regarding Europe`s southeastern parts.

It is intended that the master and doctoral students and those working on a Habilitation get the opportunity to briefly present themselves and their projects. This year the conference language is English.

We would be pleased if you forwarded our call to interested persons (especially from the wider region of Southeast Europe).

The closing date for application is 15 June 2018

Please send your application (including a short outline of your paper with approximately 250 words and a CV) to info@sogde.org.

Journey and accomodation: participants whose contributions have been selected are entitled to get a **travel subsidy** in the amount of a 2nd class train ticket to / from Tutzing.

Those who do not intend to travel to / from Tutzing by bus or by train are kindly requested to get in contact with the office of the Southeast Europe Association.

All applicants accepted for participation are invited guests of the Southeast Europe Association in Tutzing (board and lodging) during the University Week. It is expected that the guests participate in the entire event (**1 - 5 October 2018**).