The Centre in Singapore, INSEAD and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) co-organised a public lecture by Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President of the European Research Council (ERC) on 11 February 2015 at the INSEAD Asia Campus.

Prof. Bourguignon gave a positive overview of the ERC’s spending on Research and Development. The outcome has been that ERC investments now produce more scientific articles than any other region in the world, and have contributed to 10 per cent of the most cited publications worldwide. He then touched on the European Research Council, which was set up by the European Commission (EC) in 2007 in response to growing calls for a Europe-wide organisation to support frontier research. The ERC has since funneled over €4.5 billion into research projects from all over Europe, including Hungary, and has supported frontier research in all fields of science and humanities with no predetermined subjects, targeting high gain and high risk ambitious projects in particular. He also emphasized the independence, recognition and visibility that the ERC gives to researchers. This is achieved by providing true financial autonomy for five years and a grantee is allowed to work on a research topic and with a team of their choice.

Prof. Bourguignon emphasized the priority the ERC has placed on funding early-stage Principal Investigators (two-thirds of ERC grants), and that gender and geographical balance are considered. To encourage more female participation, the ERC provides an 18-month extension per child when a female applicant’s track record is being evaluated. In terms of geographical diversity, Professor Bourguignon mentioned that 28 per cent of post-doctoral team members and 17 per cent of PhDs were non-European – in particular, three Singaporeans have received Starter and Consolidator grants in 2014. Last but not least, Prof. Bourguignon also highlighted some of the factors attracting researchers from outside Europe, such as the additional €500 000 to €1 million ‘start-up’ fund for scientists moving to Europe, the ability for grantees to keep an affiliation with their home institutes outside Europe as long as they spend at least 50 per cent of their time in Europe, the possibility for team members to be based outside Europe, and support from European countries/host institutions which assist applicants and reward grantees with top-up funds. A full report on this event can be found at http://www.eucentre.sg/?p=9177.

Public Lecture by on Research in Europe by ERC President Jean-Pierre Bourguignon at INSEAD Asia Campus

### Internet: Challenges and Opportunities for Diplomacy

The EU Centre, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and the Diplo Foundation organized a lunchtime talk on the internet and diplomacy on the 13th March 2015 (Friday) by Dr Jovan Kurbalija, the founder director of DiploFoundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP). Dr Kurbalija argued that the internet has an impact in three major ways: a changing environment for diplomatic activities, new topics and issues on diplomacy, and new tools for diplomats and political leaders.

Dr Kurbalija also reminded us that the internet is not only virtual, it is also Geo-Strategic, especially when it comes to Cable geostate-ry – where cables are located and the way internet traffic travels around the world. This has led to a changing environment for diplomatic activities. The internet has also brought about important privacy questions such as the “right to be forgotten”, and a “dark web” where drugs and other illegal content are difficult for governments to tackle. Last but not least, Dr Kurbalija explained that the net has provided opportunities for political leaders to establish their social media credentials (engaging, relevant content) while preserving diplomatic credentials (avoiding unnecessary controversies and reducing risk). Today, close to 140 Ministries of Foreign Affairs have established an online presence.

For more on this report, please go to http://www.eucentre.sg/?p=9398.

### Other Event Highlights

### The Effect of Crisis on Labour’s Bargaining Power and Wage Employment Outcomes in Europe

This research seminar is based on a recent study done by Dr. Koman and his colleagues on the evolution of bargaining power of employees and management before and during the recent economic crisis in 17 European countries. The results showed that institutions play an important role in the behaviour of companies and societies as bargaining power of employees in Europe rose in the crisis period and workers were able to appropriate a larger part of the pie during the crisis than in the pre-crisis period. Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Bosnia & Herzegovina exhibited a notable decrease in bargaining power of workers during the crisis period, but this can be attributed to the social agreement activities. The outcome has forgotten”, and a “dark web” where drugs and other illegal content are difficult for governments to tackle. Today, close to 140 Ministries of Foreign Affairs have established an online presence.

For more on this report, please go to http://www.eucentre.sg/?p=9398.

### Recent Publications

**Background Brief 13:** EU Policies on Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean Sea

Dr Matjaž Koman, Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Ljubljana, on the effect of the recent economic crisis on labour’s bargaining power and wage-employment outcomes in Europe.

**Working Paper 23:** Higher education: Shaky foundations with an analysis of its role in the EU

By Mr Charles Chua (intern, EU Centre in Singapore)

**Policy Brief: Keeping EU-Asia relations on track**

By Dr Richard Youngs (EUC Visiting Fellow 2014)

**Upcoming Events**

Celebrating Singapore’s Connections with Europe Short Documentary Film Competition

16 January – 6 April 2015

For more news on our events and activities, please sign up for our mailing list or follow us on our social media accounts.

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