The Summer School "Towards a European Society? Convergence and Divergence in 20th Century Europe (Politics, Economy, Society and Culture)" was organized by the German Historical Institute Paris, International Research Network of Young Historians of European Integration (RICHIE), and the University Sorbonne-Paris IV. It took place from 4th to 10th July 2010 in Moulin d'Andé, France. Open to PhD and advanced Master students in history or related social sciences, the Summer School discussed structural change, convergence and divergence in 20th century Europe. The participants, who were requested to explore the possible applications and benefits of social science concepts and European integration theories to historical research, perceived Europeanization as a gradual political, economic, cultural and social process of convergence, leading towards an increasingly similar development of European societies. It was stated that Europeanization could be interpreted as a result of individual conceptions of "Europe" or as a consequence of external incentives and rising pressure on the different European countries and societies to cooperate with each other. However, the participants made clear that gradual processes of convergence within Europe, internal conceptions of Europe and external pressure on Europe should not be seen as separate but rather as mutually dependent phenomena. Most of the papers therefore dealt with a relatively broad definition of Europeanization, explicitly going beyond the institutional integration and including top-down as well as bottom-up processes. In contrast to more restrictive definitions of Europeanization provided by political scientists, who focus mainly on the emergence of European institutions and their growing influence on domestic politics, European integration was less referred to as a cause than as a result of Europeanization – which, admittedly, could henceforth be the starting point for a huge variety of successive evolutions.

It was precisely this broad definition of Europeanization that led many participants to question the importance of 1945 as a historical turning point and as a prelude to European cooperation. They...
argued that Europeanization had been neither a uniform nor a linear process starting with post-war European cooperation, but a long-term evolution with various points of departure, breaks, standstills and different dynamics instead. In this respect, modernization and globalization during the 19th century, for instance in the field of communication and transport, certainly paved the way for the subsequent convergence and rapprochement of European societies. The cooperation of medical institutions from various European countries in order to fight epidemics serves as just one example among many for these early forms of Europeanization. However, the first concepts for a political integration of Europe that based upon economic interdependence and cooperation, for instance by Aristide Briand, were not developed before the inter-war period. Even though the Second World War meant a considerable setback for those who advocated a democratic and peaceful cooperation between European countries, the 1930s and early 1940s should not simply be understood as a time of complete standstill with regard to Europeanization. Instead of referring to the relatively well known post-war planning of resistance movements, several participants pointed to the often neglected but indeed considerable impact of national-socialist occupation policies and economic collaboration under totalitarian auspices on post-war conceptions. On the other hand, there seemed to be no doubt that the memory of destruction and genocide had served as a decisive catalyst for European integration after 1945 which was undeniably conceived and perceived as a solution and as the only alternative to what had happened before. While stressing the structural continuities and underlying forces of Europeanization, the participants hence emphasised the far-reaching consequences of the Second World War with respect to political and intellectual history.

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Even though the notion of space was only rarely referred to in an explicit manner, it played a prominent role in many papers. Most of the participants understood Europeanization as a process transgressing traditional barriers and limitations. They stressed a general tendency to move away from national categories, accelerated by an increase of transnational phenomena and challenges such as environmental pollution, epidemics or labour migration. It was underlined that these forms of Europeanization had always reached beyond the member states of the institutional integration process. From the participants’ point of view, countries such as Austria, Sweden or Spain were subject to multilayered forms of Europeanization long before their entry into the European Union. In many cases convergence and integration amongst European countries and societies were catalysed by certain encounters with the non-European world, as in the case of the international campaigns against the sleeping sickness in African colonies or the European reactions to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Other contributions dealt with competing historical ideas and concepts of Europe, their impact on civil society, and the formation of European spaces of remembrance. However, the question of space was not only discussed in a macro-level perspective, but also in view of micro-level developments such as the entwinement of German, Belgian and Dutch civil societies in the borderlands during and after the
First World War or the growing economic integration between Rotterdam and its German hinterland since the 1960s. The difficult balancing act of post-communist Eastern European societies between Europeanization and re-nationalization was repeatedly mentioned and still requires systematic analysis.

Whereas the influence of political actors such as the European institutions themselves, national governments and diplomats remains crucial, certain other groups like retirement and labour migrants or industrialists relocating their business can clearly be identified as private actors. While in some cases it still seems justified to distinguish between the public and private sphere of Europeanization, most of the participants seemed to avoid such distinctions. The participants detected a growing range of actors who rather occupy the sphere *in between* the public-private paradigm. With European integration progressing not only at institutional level, but also in the social, economic and cultural domain, more and more actors can be described as "in-betweens". This conclusion seems particularly striking with regard to the mass media, to transnational social movements, civil society organizations or environmental associations, to elite and expert circles, academics or lobbyists. At the same time, the participants advocated a shift in focus away from those actors being either explicitly in favour of or explicitly opposed to European integration. They suggested concentrating as well on those actors who are not directly involved in shaping the process of Europeanization but are subject to it. They pointed to those who – depending on their respective interests – might occasionally act in favour of, but sometimes also against Europeanization. And they paid special attention to actors who – like conservative elites and right-wing movements cooperating on a European level for the preservation of national interests – are promoting some sort of "Europeanization against intention".

The majority of the participants opted for a comprehensive interpretation of Europeanization as an important category of historical analysis and as a long-term process running often together with or in parallel to, but sometimes also in the opposite direction of, other evolutions shaping the European countries during the 20th century, such as globalization, modernization, liberalization, democratization or westernization. Far from describing Europeanization as a linear and teleological development, they focused especially on the discontinuities and the phases of apparent stagnation repeatedly affecting the rapprochement and the integration of European states, economies and societies. It was underlined that periods of conflict, confrontation or open violence such as the Second World War or – in a less devastating way – the "standstill" of European integration during the 1970s and early 1980s had often prepared and decisively preconditioned subsequent pushes for Europeanization and integration. In line with these findings the participants identified different types of external and internal pressures accelerating and catalyzing Europeanization – among them in particular the two World Wars and their
aftermaths, the Cold War constellation and its break-up in 1989/90, the economic challenges of an increasingly globalized world trade, migration, environmental pollution and cross-border terrorism.

To sum up, the Summer School offered a good occasion to contemplate and discuss the complexity of Europeanization from an interdisciplinary angle. The cooperation between the German Historical Institute Paris, the International Research Network of Young Historians of European Integration (RICHIE) and the University Paris IV-Sorbonne provided a constructive working atmosphere stimulating a comprehensive overview of current research on the path "Towards a European Society"².

More studies focusing on Europeanization in Eastern, Central and Southeast Europe would complete this multifaceted approach. Particularly inspiring were approaches envisaging Europeanization as a process comprising not only elites and political institutions, but European societies and cultural practices.

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² Papers of the summer school will be published in an edited volume "Pour une lecture historique de l'européanisation au xxè siècle / Europeanization in the 20th century: the historical lens" by Peter Lang in 2011.