

Workshop on the Future of European Studies in Asia

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ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATION

Enhancing Academic Co-operation in Curriculum Development for European Studies in Asia and Europe

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This presentation offers to a wider audience, a number of key aspects of a current research project entitled The EU-Asia « world-wide-web » of Learning : Enhancing EU Co-operation with Asia through Educational Exchange, to be published in 2008. The project takes as a starting point, some of the conclusions drawn from previous work on EU-Asia relations.¹ It is informed, in particular, by two key findings: firstly, European Union (EU) policy-choices towards the Asian region need to become more integrated, laterally-connected and “holistic”; and secondly, one possible way in which this can happen, is through the vehicle of inter-cultural dialogue and educational exchange, especially by means of enhanced curriculum development in the subject area of “European studies” in Asia.

The presentation will investigate some of the issues in the background of contemporary Asia-Europe academic co-operation. For example, it will be argued that divergent “perceptions” of India and China in the United States and the EU have a direct impact on the “added value” of Asia-Europe educational exchanges.

In a theoretical context, the presentation will demonstrate which models and discourses are of particular relevance to the “cognitive framework” of the subject of “European studies”. This will briefly touch, amongst other issues, on “culture” and “context” in international relations, the formation and representation of “hegemonic discourses” and “identities” and the significance of selected, social-constructivist, perspectives in inter-regional educational dialogue.

The following two main parts of the presentation are in the format of a short “S.W.O.T.’ analysis”, surveying both the “enabling” and the “inhibiting” factors which influence the

¹ Wiessala, Georg (2006) *Reorienting the Fundamentals: Human Rights in EU-Asia Relations* (Aldershot: Ashgate ISBN 0754643638) and : (ed., 2007) *Reflections and Re-Orientations: The European Union and Asia* (Amsterdam: Rodopi; ISBN 978-90-420-2295-9)

discipline of “European Studies” in Asia. Curriculum development in European studies is investigated in the context of such issues as EU educational policies, “globalisation” and educational governance reform, regional integration and views of the EU across Asia. Amongst the key points for discussion raised in this part are the roles of Asia-Europe specific academic “think-tanks” and “networks”, in determining, disseminating and advancing European Studies agendas and curricula for in both regions.

The final two sections will revolve around problems and perspectives unique to teaching European studies in Asia, emphasising some of the issues which shape the contemporary discourse about curriculum development and Asia-Europe intellectual exchange. Among the main concerns are: academic standards and freedoms in Asia and Europe; the relevance of European studies for Asian élites; nature and perceptions of the “European studies” discipline in Asia and teaching and learning styles, “mind-maps” and attitudes in both East and West.

The presentation closes by suggesting a model for the determination of “added value” and of the feasibility of “European studies” programmes, networks and initiatives across Asia. It develops future perspectives for successful Asia-Europe co-operation in curriculum development for European studies. Last, but not least, the presentations briefly evaluates some of the main European studies initiatives in existence in Asia.

<p>Keywords: Asia-Europe Meeting, Education, European Studies in Asia, EU-Asia Relations, EU Education, ESiA, Globalisation, Universities.</p>

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