

Workshop on the Future of European Studies in Asia

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ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATION

European Studies: some considerations on curriculum development in and outside the EU

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As far as European Studies Programmes (ESP) are concerned, over the years, countries in and outside the European Union (EU) have developed different models which vary from general studies (more or less comparable to “area studies”) to interdisciplinary curricula or highly-specialised programmes. Right from the start, European studies appeared to be more the result of a pragmatic response to an ever evolving-situation than the outcome of a well-prepared and -conceived curriculum. It is the very evolution of the European construction and the evolving situation of the European integration process, which has mostly defined the content of ESPs. Accordingly, such programmes would have to cover the history of the European integration process, its economic implications, the legal *acquis communautaire*, its administrative and institutional aspects, and increasingly, its international dimension and its political role.

Quite evidently, the particular topic to emphasise and the respective weight of the chosen topics within the framework of the whole programmes, are strictly related to individual situations, to the available resources and in any case to the particular needs and goals – i.e. priorities – of the organising institutions. But, in any case, an analysis of the European integration process that would be limited to only one of the above mentioned topics would undoubtedly be doomed to fail.

All those aspects have to be taken into account when developing an ESP in a non-EU (Asian) country as well. Indeed, what seems to be essential for the successful completion of any ESP is a carefully designed balance between the various components alluded to above as well as a high degree of multi-disciplinarity. Moreover, in the case of a non-EU (Asian) country, particular attention must be given to the specificity of the considered country’s relations to the EU and to its geopolitical place in the world order. In order words, each ESP would have to take careful consideration of the particular needs and constraints of the considered partner.

A number of practical and logistic constraints have also to be taken into consideration, such as: language knowledge; familiarity of both faculty – in this context extensive training and retraining activities will most probably have to be considered – and student

body with the subject; relevancy of the considered programme in the national context given the particular type of relations existing between the country in consideration and the EU. In view of the above, detailed and careful attention has to be given to the preparation of the ESP one wants to implement, in terms of needs-analysis and – most importantly – in terms of the future long-term viability of the programme.