

# Reflections on the Current Crisis: Euro American Perspectives

DATE:

April 23 - 24, 2012

LOCATION:

NYU Florence, Villa La Pietra  
European University Institute

ABOUT:

Europe is living through one of its most difficult post war periods. Hope and the expectation of a better future are slowly giving way to concern and fear, in some cases even despair, about the future. Symbols of European unity —above all the euro— are under attack, while the European Parliament —an albeit weak symbol of democratic governance-- has been increasingly marginalized in the European Union's decision-making process. Concurrently, the state's role in providing social services to its citizens is being challenged. Voices that echo the past evoke xenophobic, even racist messages, and often gain widespread respectability.

In North America, the repeated deadlocks over major social and economic issues between President and Congress suggest that the United States is living through its own crisis. The banking system's role, in both the explosion of the recent credit crisis and its possible resolution, evokes much controversy. Immigration, a foundation of the United States' economic growth, is challenged by nativist voices, which are often colored by deeply rooted discourses on race. The concept of American exceptionalism, as widely accepted in the public consciousness as the concept of civilization in Europe, is defended and challenged with an intensity that hasn't been seen since the United States' defeat in Vietnam.

A diverse group of scholars and journalists will gather in Florence on April 23-24, 2012 to think comparatively about the European and North American crises. They will analyze the present situation and identify points of comparison and contrast between Europe and the United States: What are the nature and definition of the crises, their causes, and prospects for addressing them? What effect has this moment of economic and cultural disorientation had on the principles of democratic governance? How has the crisis impacted immigration policies and attitudes toward foreigners? Finally, does the present crisis color historians' approaches to or interpretations of Europe's past?

PROGRAM:

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**Monday, April 23, 2012**

**NYU Florence, Villa La Pietra, Via Bolognese 120, Florence**

- 9:30 a.m.      **Introductions. Welcoming Comments**  
Ellyn Toscano, NYU Florence  
Josep Borrell Fontelles, EUI  
Antony Molho, EUI and NYU
- 9:45-11:15      **Session 1: The Nature of the Crisis**  
Chair/Discussant: **Josep Borrell Fontelles, EUI**  
Presentations: **Loukas Tsoukalis, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy**  
**William Pfaff, The International Herald Tribune**
- 11:15-11:45      Coffee Break
- 11:45-12:30 p.m.      Discussion
- 12:45-14:15      Lunch
- 14:15-15:45      **Session 2: Democracy at the Time of the Crisis**  
Chair/Discussant: **Sven Steinmo, EUI**  
Presentations: **Stefano Bartolini, EUI**  
**Nadia Urbinati, Columbia University**
- 15:45-16:00      Break
- 16:00-17:00      Discussion
- 17:00-17:30      Break
- 17:30-19:30      **Session 3: Historians and the Crisis — A Round Table**  
Chair/Discussant: **Stephen Anthony Smith, EUI**  
Participants: **Daria Bocharnikova, Doctoral Candidate in History, EUI**  
**Fedja Buric, Max Weber Fellow, EUI**  
**Serena Ferente, King's College, London, EUI alumna**  
**Jannis Panagiotidis, Doctoral Candidate in History, EUI**
- 20:00      Dinner

**Tuesday, April 24, 2012**

**European University Institute, Badia Fiesolana, Via dei Roccettini 9, Florence**

- 9:30-10:45 a.m.      **Session 4: The Challenge of Immigration at the Time of the Crisis**  
Chair/Discussant: **TBC**  
Presentations: **Luca Einaudi, Cambridge University**  
**George Borjas, Harvard University**
- 10:45-11:15      Coffee Break
- 11:15-12:15      Discussion
- 12:15-13:15      Closing Remarks  
**Antony Molho, EUI and NYU**
- 13:15      Lunch