



# CERGU Spring 2020 Newsletter

## Director's Letter



Dear CERGU-affiliates!

It has been a most unusual semester. Despite all the predictive skills we possess, no one foresaw the closure of much of Europe that we have experienced. It is still difficult to grasp what the long-term effects of Covid-19 will be. How long will it take before it is allowed and possible to gather in larger groups again? How deeply will the standstill affect our future travel behaviors? Will the impact of the pandemic strengthen or weaken European cooperation? The questions we face are both practical and scholarly. Many research projects will probably need to be adjusted, and we should take the opportunity to think through what we really want to do now that the tracks of habit have been disturbed.

When it comes to CERGU, I was hoping to summarize a first year of the regular CERGU calendar and thereby be familiar with all usual activities. Instead, we have had to postpone and cancel most of our spring program. I want to thank Birgitta and Angie who have had to handle all cancellations and uncertainties, and yet have stood strong in these turbulent times. One thing we have been able to continue is the recruitment of new postdoc researchers. We received almost 90 applications, from Europe, North & South America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, representing a broad variety of academic disciplines from the humanities, economy, law and the social sciences (read more below). The Recruitment Committee for the two positions has worked hard, completed its review of the candidates, and narrowed the selection to a very impressive shortlist for further consideration and interviews, planned for August.

Given the [current recommendations of the University of Gothenburg](#), we do not plan to resume physical breakfast meetings before the end of October. Instead, we will have to make do with Zoom gatherings when we restart after the summer.

We plan to hold the postponed internal conference digitally on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September. Please save the date. The plan is to let as many researchers as possible give short

presentations of their research interests and plans for the upcoming years. The aim is to spark possible cooperation across subjects.

With the changing of the semesters, we also thank Andreas Moberg for his great work as deputy director and moderator of the seminar program, and now welcome Ann-Kristin Jonasson to this position. We look forward to an uncertain but still very exciting CERGU autumn. But first, let us all take it easy, and enjoy a much deserved summer holiday.

Klas Grinell, Director of CERGU

## Upcoming CERGU Postdoctoral Conferences



Since the Coronavirus crisis began, CERGU has refocused efforts to hosting online seminars and conferences. On September 17-18 CERGU postdoc in Political Science, Markus Johansson, will hold a conference on the issue of non-compliance in the EU and its causes, with the aim to also cover its effects on cooperation within the EU via the online platform Zoom.

At a later date, Ettore Costa, CERGU postdoc in History of Ideas, will host a conference entitled “The Century of Sputnik and Chernobyl: Science and the European Left during the Twentieth Century”. More information will be sent out and published on the CERGU website as these conference dates get closer.

## Candice Astorino Speaks About Brännpunkt Europa



[CERGU](#) and [CES \(The Centre for European Studies\)](#) have a close connection with the student-run group [Brännpunkt Europa](#), providing administrative support, funding, feedback and advice. The students who lead this organization are ambitious, driven and inquisitive, and in May 2020, we conducted an interview with the chairperson of Brännpunkt Europa, Candice Astorino, to hear about her experiences during her years with Brännpunkt Europa.

*Angie Sohlberg: Thanks for agreeing to chat with me, Candice! First off, what have you been studying during your time at the University of Gothenburg? Any special areas of interest?*

*Candice Astorino: I have been studying the Master in European Studies, where I developed a special interest in European external affairs and conflict resolution. I have even written my Master thesis on peacebuilding and the conflict resolution process in Kosovo.*

AS: *What made you decide to get involved in Brännpunkt Europa in the first place?*

CA: I found out about Brännpunkt Europa on my first day at GU, I quickly got along with the former Chair and Vice-Chair and it made sense to join this association that was directly linked to my studies.

AS: *What has been the most interesting part of being the chairperson of Brännpunkt?*

CA: The most interesting part was to meet incredibly smart, engaged, and fascinating people, not only our seminar guests but the students involved in the association. To share and discuss with such interesting young people has been the best part of the job.

AS: *Do you have any fun stories from your time being in Brännpunkt? Any favorite seminar guests?*

CA: Yes, I have some fun stories, especially from our “study” trip to Berlin last year which will stay in Berlin. The very diverse events and our little gatherings after school are also good memories, Brännpunkt Europa is not only organizing seminars, but creating a friendly environment for the students.

AS: *How has the situation with the Coronavirus affected [Brännpunkt's seminar series](#), and how will Brännpunkt go forward with planning for the autumn?*

CA: Besides cancelling a few seminars, that will be rescheduled for next year, we have also had to cancel our study trip to Brussels. We had so much planned, from meetings with institutions to cultural events... The newly elected board, from the Master's in Political Communication, has already made so many (virtual) plans for the fall semester. I am confident that they will continue to make Brännpunkt Europa grow even with social distancing!



AS: *What is coming up next for you?*

CA: Hopefully, an internship in Brussels in September, which I probably wouldn't have been able to secure without my experience in Brännpunkt Europa. It will give me some time to prepare my PhD application for the fall 2021.

## **86 Apply for CERGU Postdoctoral Positions**

This spring's application period for one-two postdoctoral positions at CERGU closed on May 4th. Of the altogether 86 applicants who submitted applications, 15 were Swedish citizens and applications were received from people in Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. 45 women, 40 men, and 1 other applied. CERGU has four different research themes (Cultural Borders, Mobility and Migration in Europe, Institutions, Parties, and Movements, and External Relations, Security, and Trade)

from which the prospective postdocs were asked to choose 1-2 themes that their own research connected to.

Applications have now been discussed by the CERGU Recruitment Committee, and eight potential candidates have been contacted for interviews to be held in August 2020. The expected start date for the new postdocs will be January 1, 2021.

## The University of Gothenburg Launches New Website

While many components of the academic world have come to a halt this semester, the CERGU administration has diligently been preparing for the launch of a new website, together with the rest of the University of Gothenburg.

The website will allow additional options to categorize research and publications.



According to the chief project manager Thomas Zaks: “The development project is primarily aimed at creating a new public website, with an efficient search function and a new, digital catalogue of the university’s courses and programmes. For the production and maintenance of the new website, a new strategic and operative web organisation will be established, with responsibility for content, development and administration. A new technical platform, a new web content management system, and a new search function will improve the user experience for external visitors, while at the same time making work easier for the university’s web editors.” The new website will be launched for the public on September 2, 2020.

## A Note from the Centre for European Studies



In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been a very unusual spring semester for the [Centre for European Studies \(CES\)](#). Since mid-March, we have only had online teaching. Despite the fact that most students and teachers had very limited experience of remote learning, our students have been able to finish their courses. It is an enormous achievement of our students, administrators and teachers to handle this unusual situation in such a remarkable way!

In February, CES was represented at the [Brussels Politico European Studies Fair](#). Director of double degree programmes, Urban Strandberg, together with two alumni from our Masters programme in European Studies, spent a long day talking to many presumptive students.



CES working life advisory board, [REGU](#) (Rådet för Europastudier vid Göteborgs universitet) had its spring meeting online in May, welcoming two new members to the

board: Ulf Hammarström, director-general for [SWEDAC](#) and Pierre Schellekens, head of unit, European Commission.

CES is also very proud to co-sponsor the student organisation [Brännpunkt Europa](#) together with [CERGU](#). This spring marks the eighth anniversary and before campus closed, they were able to host their hundredth lunch-seminar, well-done, Brännpunkt Europa!

For the autumn, we have new challenges ahead. Our bachelor programmes will all be based online, at least until 31 October. We will try our best to still make the new students feel welcome and get to know one another, not least with the help of the student union [SG Europa](#). Our Masters students in the campus-based programmes will have mixed forms of teaching, on campus and online. In contrast, the Executive Masters Programme in European Studies ([EMAES](#)) – targeting students with at least five years learning experience for combined work and studies – will be completely online based until January. Before that, we wish all staff and students a well-deserved summer's holiday!

Linda Berg, Director of the Centre for European Studies (CES)

## Researcher Profile: Ann-Kristin Jonasson



*Ann-Kristin Jonasson is a political scientist and the new deputy director of CERGU, beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ann-Kristin agreed to answer a few questions about her background, research interests, and plans for the future of CERGU.*

*Angie Sohlberg: Thank you for agreeing to talk to me about your new role as Deputy Director of CERGU! Welcome to the team, Ann-Kristin! I understand you have been involved in CERGU as a researcher in our network over the years. How have you been involved in the past, and what does this new role mean for your involvement with CERGU now?*

*Ann-Kristin Jonasson: Thank you so much, I am very excited to join the team as the new Deputy Director! After having been one of the two very first [CERGU postdocs](#), starting in 2006, I am now thrilled to also be able to contribute to the network in a more substantial way. I have very much appreciated the CERGU network over the years, for providing a great and engaging research environment, giving good opportunities to present and discuss research nationally as well as internationally and for*

offering a welcoming social space. As the new Deputy Director I hope I will be able to continue to develop these excellent features of CERGU even further, making the most of the developments of our time, such as the university's cooperation with our partners in the [EUTOPIA alliance](#) and the newly found opportunities of online communication, which Corona has brought insight into.

*AS: What are your main areas of research and what other interesting projects or teaching do you have going on?*

*AKJ:* After publishing my book on the [EU's democracy promotion in relation to Turkey and Jordan](#), which was the result of my CERGU postdoc project, I have continued my interest in norm-diffusion, especially related to democracy, both internationally (in relation to the EU) and nationally (in relation to the Swedish schooling system). Research-wise, I am working on two articles, one dealing with the way in which the EU relates its democracy promotion in the Middle East to its fight against terrorism ("The Double-Edged Sword of Democracy: How Democracy Promotion is used in the European Union's External Action against Terrorism in the Middle East), and one focusing on a core problem in democracy-promotion: the lack of common vision on what "democracy" actually entails ("Democracy Promotion in an Adverse Context: Approaches to Democracy in Jordan"). How democracy is promoted and what pitfalls such promotion encounters internationally as well as nationally is one of the most pressing issues in our times of serious democratic downturn, in my opinion, and we must learn more about the workings of this process and potential unintended consequences. So far, I have learnt a lot about the possible counter-productive effects of how democracy traditionally has been promoted, nationally as well as internationally.

*AS: How do you see the situation with the Coronavirus affecting the CERGU seminar series this coming autumn and in spring 2021?*

*AKJ:* As we know very little about the future in relation to the Corona-situation, I think that we need to learn to master hybrid-events that are given both off and online at the same time. I look forward to this, as this might bring out the best of both worlds (once the technical details are sorted out): physical encounters between those present, but not excluding those who cannot be there for some reason!

*AS: What are your summer plans? Are you traveling or staying home this year?*

*AKJ:* I have had to re-schedule my summer plans substantially due to Corona, but I am not at all unhappy to spend my summer along the West coast of Sweden, going SUP-ing ([Standup paddleboarding](#)) in marvelous Malö strömmar, hopefully kite surfing with my oldest son in wonderful Varberg and enjoying life in general in spectacular Smögen with my youngest son. After that, I will return fully refreshed, eager to take up the inspiring work as CERGU Deputy Director!

## Publication News

Mats Andrén has recently edited a special issue "[Focus: Thinking Beyond Europe's Cultural Borders](#)" for the journal *European Review* (Vol. 28.3 - June 2020) which included articles from many CERGU-network researchers. Andrén himself wrote two articles for the issue, as did Ann Ighe, Klas Grinell, Sune Bechmann Pedersen, Karolina Enquist Källgren, and Katarina Leppänen. We try to celebrate publications by CERGU researchers by linking to articles, journals, and books, so if you have news to share with our network, you can always contact one of the CERGU administrators or post news on the CERGU social media channels (see links below) and on the CERGU website.



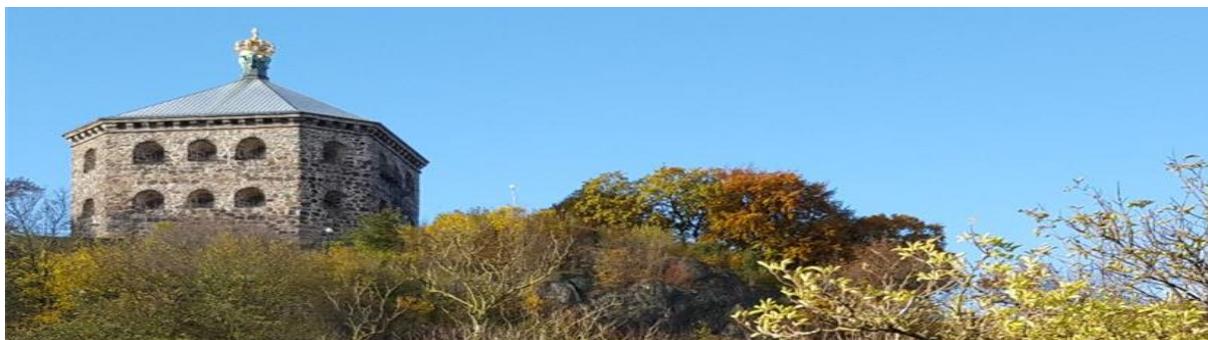
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## Upcoming CERGU Events

During the 2020 autumn term CERGU will hold a mix of events, both digitally and on-site, following the recommendations made for the University of Gothenburg. Stay updated by following us on social media and on the CERGU website.

8/9, 8.30-9.15	First CERGU Breakfast, via Zoom
17-18/9	Postdoc Conference (organized by Markus Johansson), via Zoom
22/9, 9.15-10.45	Guest Seminar: Cecilia Malmström, Lilla Skansen B340 and via Zoom
25/9	CERGU Internal Conference, via Zoom (INTERNAL EVENT)



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