

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

5<sup>th</sup> December, 2012

**The European Union – A ‘Peace Congress’ As Envisioned by Alfred Nobel?**

On the occasion of the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo/Norway on the evening of 10 December 2012, we cordially invite you to participate in the following event:

**“The Nobel Peace Prize for the European Union”**

Roundtable Discussion

Co-Discussants:

**Mr. Vincent Piket**, Head of the Office of the European Union to Hong Kong and Macao

**Dr. Roland Vogt**, Acting Director of European Studies, University of Hong Kong

**Dr. Kenneth Chan**, Elected Member of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong SAR and Associate Professor at the Dept. of Government and International Studies, HK Baptist University

**Dr. Krzysztof Sliwinski**, Assistant Professor at the Dept. of Government and International Studies, HK Baptist University

**Date/Time: 10 December 2012, 6:30 – 7:30 pm**

To be followed by Q/A with audience and press representatives

**Venue: WLB 205, Wing Lung Bank Building, Hong Kong Baptist University**

***The Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony will be broadcast live from Oslo after a short intermission from 8:00 pm onwards***

Language: English

Seats are limited. **Please register beforehand at [euaphk@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:euaphk@hkbu.edu.hk)**

The European Union Academic Programme (EUAP) is a consortium of four universities in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Baptist University, The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Lingnan University), co-financed by the European Union. It is designed to strengthen EU-Hong Kong relations through academic work and enhance the understanding of the EU.



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***'The EU is currently undergoing grave economic difficulties and considerable unrest. The Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to focus on what it sees as the EU's most important result: the successful struggle for peace and reconciliation and for democracy and human rights. The stabilizing part played by the EU has helped to transform most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace.'***  
(The Norwegian Nobel Committee, 12 October 2012)

***'Has the jury of the Nobel Peace Prize committed a Freudian slip? Was it a way of asking the Norwegian people to give up their obstinate resistance to joining the European Union? (...) Europe on the other hand should treat this Nobel Peace Prize like a poisoned chalice ...'*** (Pierre Defraigne, Executive Director of the Foundation Madariaga – College of Europe, in *La Libre Belgique*, 16/10/2012)

In 1895, the testament of the Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel stipulated that the interest of one fifth of his fortune was to be dedicated to the awarding of a recurring Peace Prize for *'the person who has done the most and the best work for the brotherhood of nations and the abolishment or reduction of standing armies as well as for the establishment and spread of peace congresses.'* Since 1901, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 93 times to distinguished individuals and organizations, among them Henri Dunant, Médecins sans Frontières, Aung San Suu Kyi, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, the United Nations and Kofi Annan, Henry Kissinger, Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk, Barack Obama or Xiaobo. Many decisions have been controversial.

In 2012, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union and its forerunners in recognition of over six decades of contributions to the advancement of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. The Committee cited as important milestones on the road to peace the Franco-German reconciliation, the accession of the newly democratic states of Greece, Spain and Portugal in the 1980s and following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Enlargement of the European Union by several states in Central and Eastern Europe. More European countries are about to join the Union, and the prospect of EU membership has generally advanced democracy and human rights in all of them. The EU has therefore opened *'a new era in European history. The division between East and West has to a large extent been brought to an end; democracy has been strengthened; many ethnically-based national conflicts have been settled.'*

The EU, pro-European governments and citizens worldwide have welcomed the decision. But it has also drawn strong criticism by 'Euro-skeptics', coming at a time of economic crisis, laments about a 'democratic

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deficit' within the Union itself, apparent rifts between member states over the precise future of the European project, and discussions about the role of the European Union in the global politics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This event is organized by the **European Union Academic Programme Hong Kong**, with additional support from the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao and the Department of Government and International Studies / HKBU.

**Press Contact**

European Union Academic Programme Hong Kong, Martin Ho (Programme Officer)

DLB 515, David C. Lam Building, Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Tel. +852 3411 8202, Fax +852 3411 5799, Email [martintcho@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:martintcho@hkbu.edu.hk)

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