Europe, Sunny Side Up
by Helmut Walser Smith, Director of European Studies

Being a dyed-in-the-wool historian, I started “getting to know Europe” by reading the first book about it: a manuscript, or a series of manuscripts, composed by Enea Silvio Piccolomini in 1458, which, either having no title or the title “The Deeds of Frederick III,” finally found its way into print in 1490, using the newly invented technology of moveable type. It then bore the title “History of Europe.” This book, which more than five hundred years later has still not been translated into English, taught me many things: that Europe was conceived in a moment of crisis after the fall of Constantinople, that its great civilizations were in the south, and that the sea that mattered to it was the Mediterranean and not the Atlantic. I also learned that Europe was already divided into nations.

But the book did not have a map, and so I have gone hunting for the first map.

The hunt proved more complicated than I imagined. The T-O maps of the Middle Ages, we might recall, offered only the barest outline of Europe; and the Mappa Mundi, like the Ebstorf map of the 1237, would have steered me along altogether incorrect routes—suggesting, for example, that I could paddle down the Main to the Weser, and from there to the North Sea. Better to get around as Chaucer and Luther got around: by asking for directions, and hitching rides.

Maps of Europe had long better served the sea traveler than the wanderer across land. Pietro Vescont, a remarkable Genoese mapmaker working in Venice, had already charted the coastlines of Italy and western Europe, especially Spain and France, with stunning precision in the early fourteenth century. And even a cursory glance at, say, the famous Catalan Atlas of 1375, shows a sharp understanding of the shape of the coastal waters in southern Europe.

The purpose of these Portolan charts was to get sailors into ports. But what happens when we get into a port? For accurate land maps of large stretches of the continent, we will have to await another century—until sometime around 1450, when the restless traveler, philosopher, mathematician, theologian, and influential Cardinal, Nicolas Cusanus, drew a hand map of Central Europe. Without peer or competitor, this map must have appeared phoenix-like, making all previous attempts to map the European lands north of the Alps seem clumsy by comparison. Yet the original “Cusanus map,” as it is called, has long been lost, and we can only guess at what it must have looked like via maps produced after Cusanus’ death in 1464. It is not even certain that there was a Cusanus map—perhaps, as in the Geography of Ptolemy discovered in Constantinople, there were merely coordinates. What we now know is that the coordinates, or the map, survived first and foremost in Italy,
and that were not for German mapmakers in Italy, the Cusanus tradition of mapmaking may well have withered. These maps were not perfect. Some of their mistakes betray the persistent influence of Ptolemy, with Scotland bending so that it hovers over Germany, the north German coast stretching out exceedingly flat, and the Rhine failing to bend as it ought to by Bingen and Basel. Yet a close look at the map—in, for example, the engraving of Francesco Rosselli—also reveals a great deal of precision concerning what we now call Eastern Europe, and especially Poland and the Baltic areas. Cusanus almost certainly received data concerning eastern topography from a Polish scholar, perhaps the humanist chronicler Jan Dlugosz, who in 1449 had been sent to Rome as an envoy of the Archbishop of Krakow. Consequently, the first accurate land map of Europe north of the Alps was a genuine European and transnational achievement, conceived by a German humanist after “a study abroad” in Italy at the University of Padua, enriched by Polish learning, and engraved in Florence and Rome. Significantly, the map is without political borders. The Cusanus map depicted Central Europe with a wide eastern aperture. France and Spain, England and Ireland, are, unfortunately, cut out. If we are looking for a full land map of Europe, we have to keep searching.

The first accurate land map of all of Europe was etched by Martin Waldseemüller, well known to us for affixing the continental designation “America”—after the explorer Amerigo Vespucci—to the southern parts of what is now Argentina and Brazil on his world map of 1507. As every American school child should know, it is thanks to this mapmaker from Lorraine that we call ourselves “Americans” and not “Columbians,” as we probably ought to.

In 1511, Waldseemüller published a Carta Itineraria Europae. This seems precisely what we have been looking for: a map of Europe to help us get around. It shows routes and tells distances between cities by counting spaces between the dots along the routes. It too is not a perfect map. Some areas, notably Eastern Europe and Spain, are not portrayed with the same precision as Germany and France, while others, like northern England and all of Scandinavia, are missing. Unlike the Cusanus map, Waldseemüller’s Carta Itineraria Europae has a political dimension; the margins that frame it contain the coats of arms of European monarchs and princes, giving prominence, as we might expect from a Lorraine mapmaker, to the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of France. In the second edition of the map, the only one that has survived, the marginal arrangement is different, highlighting the reign of Charles V, who was crowned King of Spain in 1516, and elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. Printed in 1520 to commemorate Charles’s coronation in Aachen, the map reflected new realities of power and a novel understanding of Europe’s place in the world. “Your empire stretches far across land and sea,” the dedication of the map reads, “and many countries will be governed by your word, but especially Europe is your subject; here, Charles, is the seat of your most important Empire.”

Here again, we see a connection between the description of the continent and anxiety about Europe’s place in the world. There is also a shift in the geographical center of concern: not the Bosporus, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean, but the Atlantic now emerges as the sea that matters. People who look at the map will also notice a peculiar—as sixteenth-century observers would not have, as they found it quite ordinary—that the map is upside down. Why is Europe—in its first stand-alone land map—upside down?

There is an easy answer: Following the sun, a map ought to point upward to the south, since for a daytime traveler the sun is the most reliable indicator of direction.

But this was not the orientation of medieval maps, which placed east, standing for Jerusalem, at the top. Nor was it the orientation chosen by Ptolemy, who, writing from Alexandria in Egypt in the second century, suggested a northern orientation “in order that there not be...any obscuration of the inhabited earth.” But in the second half of the fifteenth century, as the Portuguese discovered the long length of the African coast, it made sense to make maps pointing south rather than north, giving pride of place to the newly charted territories. This is one possible reason for the southern orientation. Another is that the southern orientation reflected the influence of more advanced Islamic mapmaking traditions, evident, for example, in the famous southern orientation of Fra Mauro’s World Map of 1459. But for our map, these lines of thinking, while suggestive, remain speculative. There is, I believe, a more proximate cause. We know that Waldseemüller based his map on an earlier map of Central Europe by Erhard Etzlaub, a Nuremberg clockmaker whose “Rome Way Map” of 1500 was intended for travelers making the pilgrimage to the capital of Christendom in the “Holy Year” of 1500, when many people thought the world would end. The map required a portable sun-dial with a compass, and the bearings on this sun dial pointed, logically, to the south, with midday, or Mittag, at the apogee. Etzlaub also constructed sundials, and provided instructions on the map for how to use the map and the sundial together. Direction, he wrote, is ascertained by placing the compass at the edge of the map or at the compass card, and the
A Conversation with Zeynep Somer-Topcu

From this issue onwards, our newsletter will feature a ‘Conversation about Europe’ with a Max Kade Center faculty member. The idea is to convey a flavor of new faculty’s thinking on Europe in their own words, rather than to resort to the usual biographical summaries.

Zeynep Somer-Topcu is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, with a joint appointment in the Max Kade Center. She joined the Vanderbilt faculty in the fall of 2009 after receiving her Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Davis. Her research has appeared in leading political science journals, including the Journal of Politics and the British Journal of Political Science. Her current research examines the reasons behind changes in the policy positions of political parties in Europe and the consequences of these changes for public opinion and election results. In the fall of 2010 she will offer a course on West European politics (PSCI 210).

Is Europe moving towards a ‘United States of Europe’, as T.R. Reid’s book, popular with students in EUS 201, claims? And if so, why?

The last couple of decades have witnessed increasing globalization and interdependence between individual countries as a result of new technologies in communications, new developments in the transportation industries, and increasing economic and social interactions around the world. This is not peculiar to Europe. These days a person in the U.S. can turn on her computer and talk for free to her relatives in India. A businessman in China can have a video conference with a Swedish company without leaving his office. With all these developments, the world becomes more united. It is a natural corollary, therefore, that Europe also becomes more united.

So, forget about Coudenhove-Kalergi, Robert Schuman, Francois Mitterand, Helmut Kohl and other ‘European visionaries’?

Of course, it is not only the changes in technologies that help Europe to come together, but it is also in the self-interest of nation states. Let’s look at the origins of the European Union. The goal after 1945 was to prevent another world war. The founders of the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community in the 1950s knew that economic and eventual political integration was the only way to prevent another war and reconstruct their economies. Over time, other European states saw the benefits of this European integration. Economic and international benefits surpassed the costs. If Malta, which is the smallest country in the European Union, was not a member of the EU, how easily could it engage in trade relationships with China or the U.S.? How could Greece overcome its economic problems without the help of its partners? It has been all these benefits for the countries in Europe that pushes for a more unified Europe and toward a single “European politics”.

You mention Greece…

If you are asking whether these calculations have always paid off, and will always pay off, then, unfortunately, the answer is: not to the extent some European politicians would like to see. Nation states, national identities, and national politics still count more than a single European identity or unified European polities. We are nowhere close to having a united Europe when we consider separate cultures, languages, and identities. Even when it comes to the economic policies, on which the European Union can claim some more control with its competencies, national interests still come first. Especially in difficult times, like these days, as we experience a global economic recession, each country feels more on its own. A union of European countries means not only that the benefits for one country are for all, but it also means that if one country suffers, it is very likely that all the other countries will suffer along with it. This is what we see these days in Europe. There has been widespread panic around Europe as a result of the Euro crisis in Greece. Even countries like Britain and Ireland, which are not in the Eurozone, are not immune from the possible contagious effects of the Greek crisis because of their high trade dependence with Europe and strong business relations.

‘For better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health…?’

European countries face a conundrum these days. On the one hand, the European Union members know that it is time to speak with one voice and overcome the economic hurdles with a united force. Not only Germany or France as the strongest euro members should shoulder the burden, but Britain should give a hand, too. On the other hand, each member state cares first and foremost about its own wellbeing. Politicians know that they will be judged in their national elections, and that they have to save their national corporations and businesses before saving the European Union.

If the European Union can overcome this economic crisis with a united effort, a more economically and politically united Europe will follow. However, if everyone continues blaming each other, if British politicians play this rhetoric against the European Union in their election campaigns in the upcoming national election, if Germany does not work alongside with others in helping out Greece, and if the group of countries known as the PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain) does not apply the austerity measures, all this can easily lead to a divided Europe.

The PIIGS – Europe’s answer to the BRIC countries… sounds ominous!

The European Union has become more united since the first popular elections to the European Parliament in 1979, since the Maastricht Treaty, which transformed an economic community into a “European Union” when it came into force in 1993, and since December, 2009, when, after all those months of negotiations and struggles, the Treaty of Lisbon came into force taking unification one step ahead. However, Europe is still very much about national identities, economies and
New Course Offering Fall 2010

The interdisciplinary program in European Studies is pleased to announce an additional course in the Fall semester. Dr. Thomas Wild is offering EUS 260: Writing on the Wall: Contemporary Berlin Literature and Film (see course description below). Dr. Wild is the Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation research scholar in residence during 2010/11. He has taught at the universities of Munich and Berlin, at the Berlin Center of IES Abroad, and he was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Oberlin College, Ohio. He also serves as a literary critic and cultural correspondent for German national dailies Der Tagesspiegel, and Süddeutsche Zeitung.

His research and teaching center on 20th century German literature and film, on the political dimensions of culture, art, and thought as well as on contemporary developments in German media and society after 1989.

EUS 260: Writing on the Wall: Contemporary Berlin Literature and Film Like a lens, Berlin focuses contemporary Europe. In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall brought the iron curtain crashing down. Today, the rapidly changing, multi-ethnic metropolis is the gateway to Eastern Europe, a lynchpin in the political and economic landscape of the EU, and a center of gravity in European and cosmopolitan arts, media and letters. This is no coincidence. As political systems came and went in Germany’s turbulent twentieth-century history, Berlin has remained a capital of culture, sometimes embattled, always contested and recently resurrected. Its pre-eminence is especially evident in literature and film, media which reveal unusually close connections between politics, art, and social life. It is this nexus that the seminar will explore, using original artwork (dubbed in translation, no German required).

Europe, Sunny Side Up (continued from page 2)

map is then turned until the cardinal points (sunrise, midday, sunset, midnight) of the compass and the map correspond.

All of this would be very helpful. There is however a problem: there is only one copy of Waldseemüller’s map; it is in the library of Tirol State Museum in Innsbruck; and it never found its way into print.

We have to keep looking. But we need not look very far. There exists a printed map of Europe, based, if not perfectly, on either Waldseemüller’s map, or a common source. This is Sebastian Münster’s map of Europe in his 1540 edition of Ptolemy’s Geography. The context is important. Münster’s “Ptolemy” was the most up to date anywhere available, with extensive commentary, and a new translation from Greek into Latin. Münster also depicted North and South America together on one sheet, and this depiction is widely considered the first visual representation of a distinct western hemisphere, a “new world,” as he put it, binding, as mapmakers before him had not done, the two continents together. In the context of the discovery of the new world, we might say, the shape of Europe assumed more precise contour.

Finally, our map of Europe! We see prominently an ocean ship approaching the continent. Is it returning from the new world? We also notice something else. Europe is upside down, or rather sunny side up. Münster was evidently not concerned about the orientation, or even about consistency, as his other continental maps have a northern orientation. More importantly, and distinct from Waldseemüller, there are no political divisions, and the coloring—which may or may not have been done in Münster’s workshop in Basel merely denotes rough linguistic zones. Münster shows us a Europe of nations—Italia, Germania, Hispania, Gallia, Anglia, Dania, Graecia, Sarmatia (for the Slavic lands)—and, in only slightly smaller print, of old regions, like the Languedoc in France, or Calabria in southern Italy. In this map, the transition from region to nation is fluid: “Anglia” is set in large, bold letters, but “Italia,” for example, is not, while Portugal is rendered with smaller letters than Hispania, even though at the time it was a powerful and independent kingdom. Moreover, the relative positions of regions are not strictly maintained. Bosnia, for example, seems too far to the west of Croatia; and the Limousin seems to abut the Atlantic. The coordinates of cities are not kept in line either. Erfurt is to the east, not to the west of Augsburg, and Buda (as yet without Pest) is not so far away from Vienna as Münster suggests. Nor is “Londinium” on the left bank of the Thames. In Münster’s map, the designation “Paris” has strayed from the Seine. And Ireland seems a fanciful place, its depiction less accurate than in the original coordinates of Ptolemy, who charted it from Egypt in the second century. Some details Münster did not bother with. He barely sketches a bulge in the Rhine for Lake Constance, which he had surely seen, as it was only a two-day horse ride from Basel, and he prided himself as a charter of Europe’s great rivers, having figured out the bends in the Rhine, and the source, so he claimed, of the Danube.

Probably, to Münster this was all beside the point. He wanted to present an image of a continent, which existed alongside other continents, only then beginning to be known. Europe was tied together by rivers and mountains and cities; politics is not yet decisive to this continent, and the small divisions of Europe seem as yet unimportant. But, as the ship suggests, discovery is decisive. It was in the discovery of the world that Europe discovered itself. This is what this map—at least to me—seems to be saying.
Berlin Wall Anniversary

In 1989, the crumbling of the Berlin Wall symbolized the demise of Soviet rule in Eastern Europe and the beginning of a new era. Last semester, supported by the German Embassy in Washington, the Max Kade Foundation and the European Union, Vanderbilt commemorated the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in style. EUS senior Lauren Ross was one of the principal student leaders of this effort. Here, she reflects on the experience.

Last year, with your help, Vanderbilt celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, and it struck me that many of our students had not even been born — how old were you when the wall came tumbling down?

Lauren Ross [pauses]: Two — I had to think about that one. I was born in 1987, so two.

So, why did you get interested in this whole thing?

LR: Well, I went on a Maymester in Berlin in 2007, and I really did not think about it much before then. Most high school history courses stop in 1945, there is just too much to cram in, so you really only hear about it at college. Then I went to Berlin, and we lived in a place that was literally a stone’s throw from where the Wall used to run, on Bernauer Strasse, and so I became interested in contemporary Germany, but also in the bigger picture, Eastern Europe. I went to Prague, and travelled in Poland, and from Estonia all the way down to Slovenia and Croatia in my second summer abroad, and there, issues of transition are even more obvious in many ways.

Ok, so you were sold when VU won the awards to host celebrations, but how did you get your peers interested? I mean it’s not exactly instant gratification.

LR: Food always works! In all seriousness, we first of all looked towards those who were already interested in modern Europe, EUS minors and majors, European History students, and of course the German Department. As to the Gala event, we thought that the names, hearing people like John Kornblum, the former ambassador to Germany, would get people to attend, and we designed the Gala so that their interest would be sparked and they would think about it more. Other parts of the project, such as the replica of the Berlin Wall between the Vanderbilt and the Peabody campuses, those were designed to speak to all students, including those who were not necessarily interested in Europe over the last twenty years.

What surprised you most about what worked and what did not work about the project?

LR: I was extremely impressed with how well the wall worked. I was, you know, I wouldn’t say skeptical, but if you have seen the real Wall then you think — hm, what is this going to look like, is it going to be just four pieces of plywood leaning against a building, but it turned out really well. I was giving campus tours during the time it was up, and I saw huge groups of students at it, and I heard about how interested it got people. It was a neat way of making the abstract ideas behind the project — walls, barriers to freedom, mental habits and acceptance, repression and so on — accessible, to open the way for an educational experience, to spur the imagination and invite questions.

Do you have any ideas on how to build on that excitement going forward?

LR: Let me get back to you on that! Seriously, possibly building events around the subsequent developments, like formal reunification in Germany in 1990, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the ‘velvet divorce’ of Czechs and Slovaks in 1993. These all have 20 year anniversaries coming up, so you’d keep the theme of the 20th anniversary but broaden the scope.

Plus, by the last one we’re almost into the 25th anniversary of 1989 and we can start over!

LR [laughs]: Well some of us organizers are abroad, in Regensburg and in Milan this year, and others are graduating, but I am sure you will find students interested in taking a part in organizing similar events down the line. They should be!

So we can count you in for the 30th anniversary?

LR [laughs] gosh, I’d love to. Nashville... we’ll see.
Getting to Know Europe...

A Year Later Still Learning Together

By Dr. Pearl G. Sims, Professor of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations and Ms. Leigh Shoup, M.Ed. Candidate, both of Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

It is hard to believe that almost a year has passed since ten educational and policy leaders from the mid-South and six participants from Vanderbilt traveled to Belgium for a week to learn about European Union (EU) institutional structure and educational policy reform. A “Getting to Know Europe” outreach grant from the European Union awarded to the Max Kade Center (MKC) for European and German Studies, in partnership with Peabody College, made the trip possible.

The study tour was created as a way to raise the awareness of educational policy leaders throughout the Southeast U.S. about the relevance of the EU in local, state, and regional affairs, including the local and regional economy. The initiative’s main objective was to prepare educational policy leaders who can promote a more informed and effective course of action for developing global competencies within their schools, districts, and states.

The policy leaders realized that the tour was only the first step towards this primary objective, and began to meet and create a framework of global competencies to be integrated into current U.S. educational standards. Their ongoing work focuses on why such standards are necessary at this time and on how K-12 schools in the Southeast can adopt a framework of global competencies. The group’s framework is intended to help the policy leaders advocate for schools where all students can become more knowledgeable, civically active, and economically productive in our evolving global market. The work group’s efforts to date have produced a policy brief regarding global competencies, a website that provides materials, information, and a web-based forum to promote continued dialogue about educational policies, available at http://www.vubrussels.com.

Another long term effect of the “Getting to Know Europe” grant has been the fostering of a stronger collaboration between the Max Kade Center and Peabody College. By looking at population growth and diversity statistics in the U.S., current trade patterns between the U.S. and other nations, and also examining how U.S. students fare in certain assessments among their peers in other nations, the need for embracing global competencies in our schools is apparent. Peabody College’s mission is to prepare students with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to succeed in a global society. Peabody recognizes that the growing collaboration with the Max Kade Center is an important step in fulfilling this mission.

The study tour and work group members are listed below:

Policy Leaders:
- Dr. Lyle Ailshie, Director, Greenville City Schools, Greenville, Tennessee
- Dr. John Bell, Coordinator, Leadership and Evaluation Alabama State Department of Education
- Dr. Susie Bunch, Mississippi Center for Education Innovation
- Dr. Jeanne Burns, Assistant Commissioner for Teacher Education Initiatives, Governor’s Office, Board of Regents, State of Louisiana
- Ms. Cory Curl, Education Council, Washington, D.C.
- Mr. Paul Fleming, Principal, Hume-Fogg Academic High School, Nationally Ranked Magnet School, Nashville, Tennessee
- Ms. Margaret Horn, Senior Management Consultant, Governor’s Office of State Planning and Policy, State of Tennessee
- Dr. Kathy O’Neill, Director, Learning-Centered Leadership Program, Atlanta, Georgia
- Dr. Rich Rhoda, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Nashville, Tennessee
- The Honorable A.C. Wharton, Jr., Mayor, Memphis, Tennessee

Vanderbilt University:
- Professor John A. McCarthy, Director Max Kade Center for European & German Studies, College of Arts & Science; Principal Author EU Grant “Getting to Know Europe”
- Professor Pearl Sims, Department of Leadership Studies, Peabody College of Education; Principal Partner, EU Grant “Getting to Know Europe”
- Professor Virginia Scott, Department of French and Italian, College of Arts & Science
- Ms. Leigh Shoup, M.Ed. Candidate in Organizational Leadership, Research Assistant
- Ms. Eleanor Durham, M.A. Candidate in English and European Studies, Research Assistant

www.vanderbilt.edu/euro
“Adieu, Florence!”

by Henning Grunwald, Associate Director of the Max Kade Center

During her tenure as the Associate Director of the Max Kade Center, Florence Faucher-King was more than a colleague to me: Florence held the keys to my well-being, quite literally. To be more precise, Florence occupied, or rather filled with life, the office next to my own, an office which, it turned out, holds the temperature controls for the air-conditioning in both our rooms. Now, to be at the mercy of an avowed environmentalist in this critical area might have foreshadowed trouble, but, here as in all other aspects of her professional life, Florence turned out to be a model colleague: always open to discussion, tolerant towards the views of others, patient with the shortcomings of her coworkers and gracious both in defeat and (more frequently) in victory.

As the first tenured appointment whose institutional home was European Studies (jointly with Political Science), Florence has a special place in the short but vibrant history of our center. Before joining Vanderbilt, she had held positions on the faculty of the Universities of Oxford and Stirling in the United Kingdom and at Sciences Po in Paris. An expert on both the British Labour government and green politics in Europe, Florence completed her biography of Tony Blair while at the Max Kade Center. Together with John McCarthy, she was the leading light of our efforts to win European Union funding for expanding the outreach activities, and in that sense all that happened at Vanderbilt and in the mid-South under the auspices of the ‘Getting to Know Europe’ program is thanks in large part to her. She offered popular classes which were as eclectic and lively as the instructor herself, and her students will miss her.

So will her colleagues, myself included. Like all of us in the Max Kade Center, I profited enormously from Florence’s learning, dedication to her research and teaching, and her professionalism. To say nothing of her charm – no-one else in European Studies wears their learning quite so gracefully! My fears about freezing in winter or boiling in summer proved unfounded, and like all of us I soon cherished Florence’s quasi-permanent good cheer, unquenchable temperament, impromptu tea parties (not that kind) and even her raised eyebrows at my aviation enthusiasm.

Florence has taken up a tenured position as senior researcher at her alma mater, Sciences Po. All of us at European Studies wish her well, and look forward to working with her to strengthen the ties between Vanderbilt and her new institutional home. In that sense, it’s not adieu so much as au revoir!

Zeynep Somer-Topcu (continued from page 3)

policies. Further and stable integration is possible only if everyone gives a hand and works hard.

Do you think this ‘everyone’ might include Turkey anytime soon? After all, membership in what was then the European Economic Community was more or less promised to Turkey as far back as the 1960s.

I do not see full Turkish membership in the European Union in the near future. It was only a couple of weeks ago that German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated the same during her visit in Turkey. Merkel’s idea of a “privileged partnership” for Turkey finds increasing support around Europe. According to this proposal, Turkey would receive all the economic benefits of EU membership, but would not have any seats in EU institutions, and therefore no political power. Supporters of this proposal in Europe state that this also is in Turkey’s interest, because there will be much less interference into Turkish politics and economics than current EU countries experience. However, as you can imagine, Turkey is completely against this proposal. Turkish politicians are angry because they see this as a reversal of promises given to Turkey over the last ten years. They blame the European Union of being a Christian club, afraid of accepting a country where the majority of the population is Muslim.

So - what will happen in the near future?

I think that Europe is not ready to accept Turkey as a full member. It may take decades before any possibility for full membership arises, if it arises at all. The question is, then, what will Turkey do? Recently, Turkey has started establishing and renewing bonds with the Middle Eastern countries. The sanctions against the Iranian government were one of the important issues during Merkel’s visit to Turkey, for instance. Merkel wants Turkey to side with Europe and force Iran to discontinue its nuclear program. However, Iran is an important trading partner of Turkey. Recent Turkish foreign policy has also alienated Israel. Once a strong partner, Israel is concerned about strong Turkish support for Palestinian people and strengthening relations between Turkey and the Arab world.

Feeling scorned, Turkey might turn her back on Europe, and the West, for good?

Some are concerned that if the “privileged partnership” proposal is pushed too much, or if Turkey is rejected from Europe all together, Turkey may turn its back to Europe and seek closer relations with the Middle Eastern countries. As a strong secular and democratic partner in the buffer zone between Europe and the Middle East, not only Europe but also the US would not like that. However, I do not believe that Turkey, even with its current conservative government, can undertake such a radical shift in its policies. Turkey currently is trying to establish herself as the leading country in the Near East. Its growth rates are high and it has a young population. But at the same time, Turkey would not want to endanger its important geopolitical position between the Arab world and Europe and all the benefits this position brings to her.

The future for Turkish membership is not clear, and many may say that we are in dangerous waters. However, I think that we are at an equilibrium point where neither Europe nor Turkey has an incentive to shift its position. The equilibrium may lead to chaos with one mistake. However, I do not see any significant (positive or negative) changes in the near future.

Thank you very much, and once again, welcome to Vanderbilt!
News & Notes

Congratulations, Mr. Xu!

Neuroscience and EUS double major Tim Xu has been chosen as one of only two Vanderbilt University students to attend the prestigious Ecole de Sciences Politiques in Paris (where he will have a chance to study with Florence Faucher-King, see page 7). We are delighted that Tim was successful in this highly selective competition and wish him a rewarding study abroad experience.

Congratulations, Ms. Esbrook!

EUS major Leslie Esbrook, who attended Sciences Po last year, is in the running to graduate with Vanderbilt University Founders’ Medal around her neck. Leslie is under consideration for this, Vanderbilt’s most prestigious academic award for undergraduates, because she ranks among the top five seniors by GPA average. All of us in European Studies wish her well and share her pride at this accolade.

Director’s Book Garners Applause, Courts Controversy in Germany

When it appeared in English last year, MKC Director Helmut Walser Smith’s latest book The Continuities of German History sparked a debate in Germany. His argument about the exclusionary forces shaping German anti-Semitism in the long run, from the Peace of Westphalia to the Weimar Republic, attracted high-caliber reviewers writing in a number of professional journals, but also in the prestigious national daily newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Now that the book has appeared in German translation (Fluchtpunkt 1941. Kontinuitäten deutscher Geschichte), the debate has been rekindled. Der Spiegel magazine ran an article about the book and its media echo in its second April issue. The story continues...

NOTE: Our rubric ‘Faculty News and Publications’ will resume in the fall issue of the MKC newsletter – please let us know about your work so we can include it come next semester!

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