

## **AN IMPORTANT INNOVATION AT SCIENCES PO: THE EUROPEAN PROGRAMME ON CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN DIJON**

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The Dijon-based Sciences Po European Undergraduate Programme on Central and Eastern Europe was founded in 2001. It is a very special place, certainly unique in France, maybe even in Europe. Small classes of highly motivated and rigorously selected students coming from France and from several Central and Eastern European countries work together, in a spirit of European openness of mind. They are confronted with the strong academic requirements that are at the basis of Sciences Po reputation, and get familiarised with the fundamentals of social sciences, with a special focus on the European Union in the post-enlargement context.

Conceived by Sciences Po as a contribution to the shaping of new generations of European decision-makers, the programme serves a double purpose through a cross-fertilising process of learning. On the one hand, French students discover the specificity of Central and Eastern Europe – in particular, by learning one of the region's languages – and adjust to a broader vision of Europe; on the other hand, Central and Eastern European students are trained to use French methods of argumentation and expression.



One of the most original and innovative pedagogical features of the Dijon campus is the Winter School, a fully-fledged academic module consisting of a week-long intensive seminar dedicated, in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of study, to *Sociology and History of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, 1917-1989*, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study, to *Sociology and History of Post-Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, 1989-2004*. The seminars are intended to introduce students to the overall political, social and economic evolutions of Central and Eastern Europe, to help them understand of the phenomena of communism and post-communism – but also, to provide them with a first initiation to social sciences research methodology. One of the course's main evaluation requirements for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students is to produce a substantial research paper on a topic related to current situation in a Central or Eastern European country. The papers are prepared by small groups of students and are due within the two months following the seminar.

The quality of the papers is generally excellent – even outstanding, if one keeps in mind that they are written by second-year undergraduates. I am happy and proud that some of them had been considered remarkable enough to be published on this website. It is indeed a great honour to see that papers written by students of the Dijon campus are the first contribution to the CERI website's new subsection dedicated to Central and Eastern Europe.

I am very thankful to the Director of CERI-Sciences Po for making this on-line publication possible. My special gratitude goes of course to François Bafail, who has been the Dijon Winter School's director ever since its establishment six years ago, for his great contribution to our work.